

March / April 2015

adoption

opening hearts. changing lives.

INDIANA'S ADOPTION PROGRAM





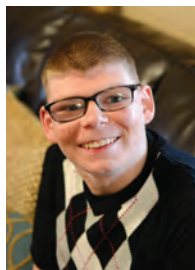
Hubert



Michael



Alex



Dalton



Julie



Chadrick



Shannon

Expect Great Things

When Shannon and Hubert Schulz adopted from the Special Needs Adoption Program, multiple healthcare professionals told them, “Don’t expect anything from these children.” Their children faced a wide range of challenges and diagnoses, including Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Reactive Attachment Disorder, and Shaken Baby Syndrome, and doctors predicted that they would never be independent. But the Schulz family refused to accept that mindset. “They’re going to be heroes!” says Shannon.

Shannon and Hubert’s adoption story started with a phone call from the Department of Child Services, asking if they would take two very challenging boys. Shannon and Hubert’s response: “Bring it on!” Since the day that they became foster parents, and eventually adoptive parents, they have done everything in their power to help their kids overcome odds and be independent. Their advice to parents is:

1. Show the children how much you care. They will not care about what you are trying to teach them until they know that you really care about them.
2. Make sure every child knows that he or she is worth fighting for, and that you will fight for them even when they don’t feel like fighting for themselves. Giving up is not an option.
3. Each child is an individual, special and unique, so you must formulate solutions to their problems and help them overcome their obstacles individually and uniquely.
4. Set them up to succeed. Create situations and opportunities for a child to achieve and succeed academically, socially, recreationally, etc. Start with things you know they can achieve, and then move to more challenging things.

The Schulz children are very successful and active in their community. They participate in Tae Kwon Do and swimming. They play musical instruments. They volunteer at the local animal shelter. Two of the Schulz boys, Alex and Chadrick, recently received Youth Volunteer of the Year awards at the Humane Society, and they are excited at the possibility of maybe working at an animal shelter someday.

The Schulz family cites their faith, their amazing support system, persistent optimism, and the children’s hard work as the main reasons for their children’s success. One thing is for sure: you can expect great things from these kids.



Alex’s favorite part about volunteering:
“I get to help dogs be prepared for adoption.”

Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**

Welcome to the Indiana Adoption Program



The Indiana Adoption Program is a statewide effort to create permanence for children who are wards of the State of Indiana. It is a program of the Indiana Department of Child Services in collaboration with the Children's Bureau, Inc.

There are many aspects of adoption and the Indiana Adoption Program is just one of those aspects. We will help you consider some aspects of adoption in this book.

The picture book is also available on the internet. To view a current list of children available go to <http://www.adoptuskids.org/states/in/index.aspx>. You may download a PDF copy of this "Opening Hearts. Changing Lives." Adoption Picture Book at <http://www.in.gov/dcs/2737.htm>

To learn more about Children's Bureau, Inc., see us on the web at: www.childrens-bureau.org or call for a brochure: 317-545-5281.

To mail correspondence to the Indiana Adoption program send to:

The Indiana Adoption Program
c/o Children's Bureau Inc.
3801 N. Temple Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

The Indiana Adoption Program would like to thank Cassidy for the front cover illustration and Martez for the back cover illustration.

MARY BETH BONAVENTURA
DIRECTOR

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN,
FAMILIES & FUTURE.



Indiana Adoption Program

Table of Contents

What is Adoption?	42
How Do I Start The Adoption Process in Indiana?	43
How to Adopt Overview	44
Step 1: Educate Yourself about Adoption	44
Step 2: Decide What Type of Adoption You Want to Pursue	46
Step 3: Investigate Ways to Cover Adoption Expenses	46
Step 4: Select an Adoption Agency	47
Step 5: Let Your Agency Know You Are Serious about Adopting	47
Step 6: Adoption Application	47
Step 7: Attend Adoption and Parenting Classes	48
Step 8: Begin the Family Preparation Process	48
Step 9: Begin Searching for a Child	49
Step 10: Considering a Child	49
Step 11: Prepare for Your Child's Arrival	50
Step 12: The Child is Placed in Your Home	50
Step 13: File a Petition to Adopt	51
Step 14: Finalize the Adoption	51
Common Challenges of Children With Special Needs	52
The Legal Aspects of Adoption	54
Adoption Chart	55
Youth Connections Program	56

If I inquire about a child, does this mean I will get to adopt this child?

A prospective adoptive parent must have completed the Family Preparation process and be approved to adopt a child introduced in this book. If you are just beginning that process or have not yet begun, a child you see here may be living with a new family before you complete the Family Preparation process.

If you become their adoptive parent, a child's future development, well being, and sense of family and community will rest with you.

Therefore, adoption requires serious considerations.

The child's social worker or adoption team will help determine if you and your family are compatible with the child and there may also be several families that are considering the same child.

Subscription Information

You can receive a six-month subscription to this magazine by mailing a \$15 check along with your name and address to:

Children's Bureau Inc.
3801 N. Temple Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

If you have any questions please call
1-888-25-ADOPT.

Meet Our Children

In this book you will see many different faces of youth. The words next to their faces only tell a partial story. Their biography is not complete. Any young person's story is worthy of telling you, yet what you read here about them is just a few short sentences.

The paragraphs next to each child are an introduction. Beyond the paragraphs, we want you to know the whole biography of a child when you are considering making a commitment as a parent; however here in this book we balance your need to know with a child's need for privacy and sense of well-being.

Children who have experienced foster care all have one thing in common: they have had to leave their home. And by that very fact alone, their need for healing, stability and nurturing requires attention. Children who have had to endure neglect, abuse, or trauma can face many challenges. Those challenges can range from mild to severe and can also be temporary or permanent.

The challenges our children face will not be detailed in the introductions. Listing a short medical or mental health diagnosis can sometimes be misleading and can breach confidentiality. You can read about some of the challenges that are common to many children in the adoption program in a separate section of this book.

In the adoption program, many of the children are older and may have physical, mental or emotional impairments. Some have brothers and sisters in the program with them and they may need to live together or they may need to keep their essential connection to each other through different living arrangements.

The youth featured in this book are in foster care and they may live with a foster family or they may be living in a group home or other child-caring facility such as a treatment center. Every child needs the love and support of a family. We invite you to learn more about adopting children in the Indiana Adoption Program.

You will see a number next to each child's introduction. Please refer to this number when making an inquiry about them.

Indiana Adoption Program



Ariel, Aaron, & Ladarion

Ariel is a very intelligent, well-spoken fourteen-year-old girl. She makes friends easily and likes to play with other children. She is creative and likes to draw and color. Ariel loves to sing and dance and will often make up her own songs and dance moves.

Aaron is a bright, inquisitive thirteen-year-old who likes to learn new things. His favorite subjects in school are math and science. Aaron enjoys reading and spending time with friends.

Ladarion loves to run around and has a lot of energy. He is talkative ten-year-old boy who is playful and delights in doing new activities. Although he likes to be outside, Ladarion also enjoys playing video games and watching cartoons. Ladarion enjoys school and being around other children and learning new things.

These children look forward to being in a home where their parents can be patient and supportive as well as committed to keeping the three children together. These children will thrive in a structured, peaceful, loving environment. (5058ABCI) *Lake County*



Mercedes



Dymond

Mercedes is a good student who wants to be an artist or an art teacher when she grows up. She is a very active twelve-year-old and she enjoys riding her bike, jumping rope, and running. Mercedes would like to participate in band class at school and she enjoys being involved in choir at church. She makes the honor roll at school and she loves to help take care of dogs.

Dymond loves to dance and play with toys and dolls. She is a pleasant ten-year-old girl who makes good grades. She loves attention! She enjoys watching movies and she reports that she likes to brush her teeth. She attends church with her siblings and participates in choir and church readings.

Mercedes and Dymond would do well in a loving two-parent home with parents who are firm, but fair. These children will need supervision and parents who can provide stability, patience, and security. They are learning the importance of family and they want to be adopted. They would enjoy being in a home that has a dog. (8161ABIA) *Lake County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Devin & Tovar 🎬

Tovar is very athletic boy. He could play sports all day and never get bored. He stays active and he enjoys spending time with his siblings. Tovar, who is fourteen years old, says he does not like to have his picture taken, but will always sneak in a smile or two. He likes spending time with his siblings and would like to maintain contact with them.

Devin is an outgoing and likeable twelve-year-old boy who does well with other kids. Church is one of his favorite things and enjoys participating on Sundays. Devin does really well with animals and hopes to have pets in his new home. Sports have been a positive outlet for both of these boys and they would do well with a family that can encourage their athleticism.

These boys would like to live in a home with a mom and a dad. They also want to keep contact with their sister. Their new family will need to provide a safe, consistent, and nurturing home, and they will need to encourage the boys' behavioral and emotional wellbeing. (8163ABBS) *Daviess County*



Gregory & Michael

Gregory, who prefers to be called Greg, is bright and funny. He enjoys music, art, and reading. Gregory, who is fourteen years old, loves science fiction and fantasy books. He is a fan of the outdoors and finds that being outdoors calms him. He likes fishing and swimming very much. He is a caring and helpful boy who is accepting of others and makes friends easily.

Michael is quiet, sweet, and playful. He is thirteen years old and he loves to smile and tell jokes. He enjoys helping others. Michael also enjoys school, especially reading. He likes sports and hopes to join baseball, basketball, and football teams.

Gregory and Michael would do best in a two-parent home. They would like older siblings to look up to. They need positive, nurturing parents who can also provide appropriate structure and boundaries. They would love to have parents who can participate in activities with them. Gregory and Michael love the outdoors and would like to be in a home located in the country. (8164ABBS) *Crawford County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Destiny is a bright young girl who is very friendly and playful. When she grows up, she hopes to go to cosmetology school. She is very creative and loves to draw. Destiny is an excellent artist.

Logan is an energetic nine year-old child who is very outgoing and always speaks her mind. She hopes to be a nurse when she's older. She is very loving. She has an independent nature and a big heart.

Sydney is a smart and sweet girl with a positive disposition. She is energetic and loves to play. She is very funny, empathetic, and affectionate.

All three sisters have bonded well and are very close. Destiny, Logan, and Sydney would do best in a two-parent home with parents who are well versed in the effects of trauma on children. They would do well with a strong female role model. They will need caregivers who are active, can provide supervision, and will advocate for their educational and emotional needs. (8179ABCSS) *Fountain County*



Miguel is a loving, polite child who cares very much for his siblings and wants to remain in contact with them. He is quiet and has a great smile. Miguel, who is seventeen, is also very creative with music and art. Sports and spending time outdoors are his favorite activities. Miguel has a big heart and is a very caring person. He loves to learn about Puerto Rican culture and he would be excited to have a brother or a boat. He would like to be an automotive mechanic when he grows up.



Marlena is a very bright young lady who is quite the social butterfly! She is fourteen years old and she does well at school when she puts her mind to it. Marlana would like to become an anesthesiologist. She loves to work with others and enjoys being with people. She enjoys reading and helping others. She also loves to shop, get manicures, sing, and do karaoke.

Family is very important to Miguel and Marlana. They wish to remain together and they hope to stay in contact with their other siblings. Single-parent and two-parent homes will be considered. Marlana and Miguel do well with other siblings, but would like a home without cats. Dogs are okay though! They would really love a home that would allow them to be active in extracurricular activities and church activities. (8221ABJS) *Allen County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Pete



Dakota



Coby

Pete is an active and outdoorsy thirteen-year-old boy. He enjoys fishing, bike riding, and playing basketball. He has a strong desire to be a part of a “nice family” that shares similar interests with him. He hopes to live in a home with a big yard where he can ride bikes and play with other children. Pete’s faith is important to him and he enjoys going to church and studying his Bible. He likes to read, especially chapter books. Pete is well behaved and pleasant to be around. He loves animals and hopes to be a veterinarian someday.

Dakota is a happy-go-lucky ten-year-old boy. He likes to ride his bike and jump rope, and hopes his future home has a big yard where he can play and possibly a pool! Dakota loves animals and, when he’s older, hopes to work at a zoo. He is a huge fan of the show “Wild Kratts.” Dakota has a wide variety of interests, stays active, makes good grades, and is affectionate.

Coby is a sweet and funny eight-year-old boy. He enjoys going to church and reading his Bible. His faith is important to him. Coby does well in school and has excellent attendance! Coby gets along well with his brothers and likes to be active in sports like soccer and baseball. Coby is good-tempered and makes friends easily. Coby likes the outdoors and he enjoys riding his bike, fishing, and playing hide and seek.

A home that would be best for these boys would be safe, patient, kind, and nurturing. Prospective parents will need to be advocates for these boys emotional health and educational needs. These boys have a strong desire to be a part of a family. (8226ABCIA) *Lake County*



Deonte, Kevin, & Natalya

Deonte is an energetic and happy nine-year-old boy. He gets along well with people and likes to tell jokes. Sports and staying active are two things Deonte enjoys. Deonte has been doing well in school, and is good at spelling and art.

Kevin is a fun and energetic seven year-old boy. He is eager to please others and is outgoing. Playing sports and staying active are two things Kevin enjoys. Deonte has been doing well in school, and likes math and science. Kevin is a sweet boy who looks up to his brother, Deonte.

Natalya is a sweet five year-old girl who is smart, sassy, and fun to be around! She is always happy, and likes to ask questions because she is very curious about the world around her. Natalya is very smart and assertive. She likes to sing and dance and she gets along well with people.

A home that would be best for these siblings would be a two-parent household with no other children. A home that is nurturing and patient, and can encourage these kids to achieve their potential would be ideal. Potential parents should be active and able to provide a lot attention. A stay-at-home parent or a parent that would be around regularly would be best for Deonte, Kevin, and Natalya. (8233ABCJS) *Allen County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Haley, Brayson, & Jake 📺

Haley is a smart, kind, and sweet nine-year-old girl. She likes to play video games, go skating, and go bowling. She makes friends easily and is very caring. Haley likes to watch TV, her favorite show being Good Luck Charlie. In the future, she wants to go to Florida and see the beach. Haley's grades are improving in school. She is very helpful, and likes to fix things.

Brayson is a quiet, but friendly eight-year-old boy. His favorite football team is the Denver Broncos because Peyton Manning is his all-time favorite athlete! Brayson likes to joke around and is generally pretty laid-back. He enjoys the outdoors, and likes to spend time in nature or go swimming. Brayson likes riding on 4-wheelers, drawing, and playing video games. His favorite TV show is Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Brayson is very close to his brother and sister.

Jake is a sweet, energetic, and helpful seven-year-old boy. He likes to build with blocks and play Legos. Jake loves to be outside and play with his friends. Jake's favorite TV show is Sponge Bob Square Pants. Jake is helpful around the house and a hard worker. Like his brother, Jake is a huge Denver Broncos fan because he likes Peyton Manning.

The family that would be best for these siblings is one that is a two-parent home with lots of patience and an understanding of how trauma affects children. The family must have the ability to provide one-on-one attention with each child. The siblings have a grandparent to whom they are bonded and will need to remain in contact. (8246ABCBS) *Monroe County*



Dallas & James 📺

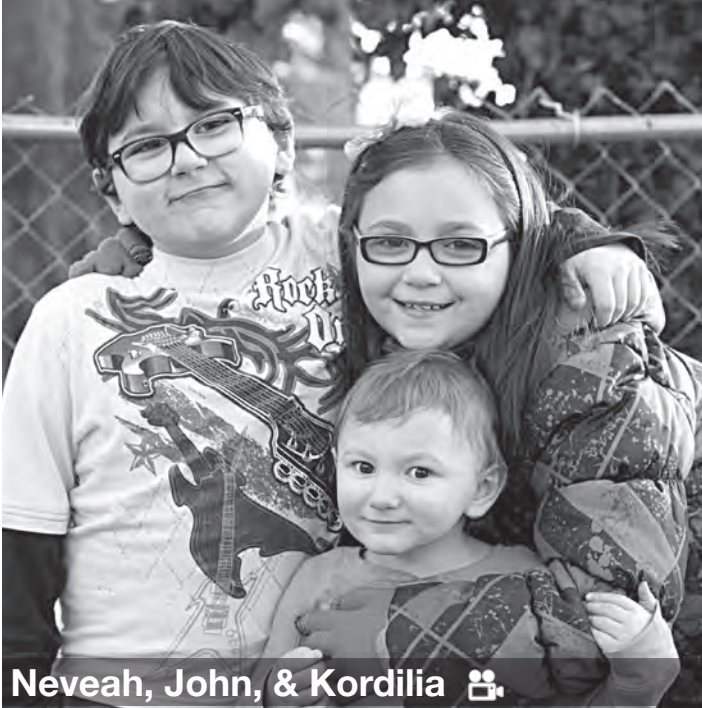
Dallas is a good big brother. He wants everyone to know that he loves his little brother. Dallas is a sweet nine-year-old boy who loves gym class because he likes to exercise. He plays a lot of sports and especially enjoys kickball and playing video games. He enjoys reading and he hopes to go to Mexico someday. His favorite movie is "Wall-E." His favorite food is chocolate ice cream. If he could have three wishes, they would be for: a new home, a new life, and more helpful people in his life.

James is shy and quiet at first, but once he warms up, he loves to talk about Batman and music. He is an energetic seven-year-old boy and he loves to play video games, especially Mario Kart. His favorite color is black and he loves to go fishing. Monopoly and Life are his favorite board games. He wants to go to Disney World someday.

Dallas and James need a family that can provide love, attention, support, and supervision. They need one or two parents who can advocate for their emotional wellbeing. They would do best as the youngest children in the home. These boys love each other very much and should be placed together. (8264ABMO) *Delaware County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Neveah, John, & Kordilia 📺

Neveah is a bright eight-year-old girl who likes to please people. She loves to color and draw, as well as participate in Sunday school activities. Neveah enjoys school. She is excited to be a part of a new adoptive home. Neveah is strong-willed, independent, mature, and determined.

John is a sweet, personable seven-year-old boy. He has a happy and easygoing personality. John enjoys going to church and YMCA programs. He is pretty outdoorsy. John also likes playing with Hot Wheels and watching cartoons. John describes himself as “pretty cool.”

Kordilia is a sweet and attentive two-year-old girl. She is very well-behaved. Kordilia is generally a happy child who does well with other children. She likes to play with others and be outside.

A family that would be best for these siblings would be able to keep a consistent schedule and adequate supervision. Families should be patient and nurturing with a large support system. Parents will need to be able to model appropriate healthy relationships. It would be best if parents continued to advocate for the children’s emotional and educational needs. (8272ABCBS) *Vanderburgh County*



Zakiya is a bright seven-year-old girl who loves to go to school. She gets along well with her teachers and peers, and is diligent at getting her school work done. She is very polite and pleasant to be around. For fun, Zakiya likes to ride her bike or play games on her tablet. She enjoys being active and playing outside. Her favorite games are Uno and Sorry! Zakiya just recently started taking dance classes and has really enjoyed herself. Others describe Zakiya as “smart, sweet, and caring.”

Deja is a friendly and outgoing six-year-old girl who can make friends with ease. She has a great sense of humor and loves to have fun. Deja likes to tell jokes and make others laugh. She has a special zest for life and strives to live life fully. She has a very special bond with her brother Jovan and sister Zakiya. Deja enjoys spending time with her siblings and playing games with them.

Jovan is an affectionate and curious four-year-old boy. He enjoys being outdoors and riding his bike, and he would like to learn how to skateboard. Jovan likes to show off his skill at playing games on the tablet. He is a cheerful and friendly who loves to have fun and would thrive in a structured and stable environment.

Zakiya, Deja, and Jovan need a loving two parent home that can provide encouragement and structure. It would be best if the parents made their expectations on appropriate behavior clear. These children have a special bond and will should remain together. These siblings do well with other children and are looking forward to being a part of a family. (8275ABCBS) *Vanderburgh County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Ciara



Namaiyah

Ciara is a fun ten-year-old girl. Ciara gets along well with others and makes friends easily. She enjoys shopping for clothes, playing with her dolls, and dancing to music. Ciara enjoys school and enjoys after school programs. She can be mature for her age and has a kind heart.

Namaiyah is a loving and smart eight-year-old girl. She loves to dance and sing. Namaiyah is full of life and likes to be the center of attention.

The home that would be best for Ciara and Namaiyah would show unconditional love. Parents should be able to provide a consistent, calm, and nurturing environment. Parents should be knowledgeable of the effects of trauma on children. An family with an extensive support system would be helpful for these sisters. Both single and two-parent homes will be considered, although it would be best if there were no other children in the home. (8279ABIA) *Lake County*



Jaye'den, Nathan, & Nylah

Jaye'den is a bright, articulate ten-year-old boy who likes to draw. He is friendly and outgoing and gets along well with his siblings. Jaye'den enjoys staying active, and likes to play sports. In his down time, Jaye'den enjoys playing on the iPad, listening to music, and watching TV. Jaye'den is a smart boy who thrives in a consistent, structure environment.

Nathan can be shy when you first meet him, but he opens up quickly and has a great smile! He is an active and athletic seven-year-old boy who enjoys football and soccer. For fun, Nathan likes to draw, play video games, and play sports. He is doing well in school and gets along well with his peers. Nathan would do well in a home that is well structured and presents clear boundaries.

Nylah is a curious and smart five-year-old girl. She is very outgoing and likes to be silly. She likes to color, style and comb hair with her dolls, and meeting new people. She is very engaging and outgoing. Nylah is doing well in school.

These siblings would benefit from a home with structure and clear boundaries. It would be best if parents are able to provide a consistent routine and adequate supervision. Parents should have an understanding of how trauma affects children. Both two-parent and single parent homes will be considered. (8281ABCJS) *Allen County*



Indiana Adoption Program

Happy Birthday to our March and April Birthdays!



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Briestyn



Kenneth



Christina



Jacob



Jesse



Aries



Isaiah



Miguel



Marlana



Dylan

Indiana Adoption Program



Christopher 🎥

Christopher loves anything that has a remote control. He keeps a sketchbook of his drawings of remote control cars and planes and all sorts of robotics that he hopes to build someday. He loves electronics and hopes to have an iPod in the future. His favorite drink is pop; he loves root beer, cherry Coke, and Mountain Dew. Christopher, who is sixteen years old, describes himself as “a creative, nice, clean hard worker” and he wishes he had a job. He has not decided what he wants to be when he grows up, but he knows he loves to build things. He also loves to sing, do math, and play with NERF toys. He would prefer to live on a farm, especially if it has bunny rabbits.

It would be beneficial for Christopher to be placed with two parents and preferably a home with older children or no other children in the home. The family would need to provide patience, support, encouragement and guidance to allow Christopher in adjusting to the home. Christopher is very eager to have a family of his own. (3672IA) *Lake County*



Jerry 🎥

Jerry is a pleasant, affectionate fifteen-year-old boy who likes to give and receive hugs. He enjoys wrestling and rough-housing on the floor. He likes music and will dance and sometimes babble, trying to sing along. He likes to rock in his rocking chair or on a rocking horse. Jerry likes swinging and climbing into things he can sit in.

Jerry is a sweet little boy who needs a family that can be patient and loving with him. Families with an extended support system, and knowledge and understanding of developmental delays and autism are preferred. (3682BD) *Bartholomew County*



Toby

Toby's favorite thing to do is to go on “tall tower adventures.” He is fascinated by electrical and cell phone towers and he loves to drive to see all the different types. He can even give directions to his favorite ones. Toby, who is thirteen years old, loves computer games and games that he can play on his iPod. He likes to play Labyrinth Two when he is inside. When he is outside, he likes to ride his bike and he always wears his helmet. He likes to swim, dance, and read SpongeBob books and Berenstain Bears books. Toby is a friendly, outgoing child who loves to be helpful and loves to share things with others. Toby has made great strides with communication skills and activities of daily living. He is eager to please others and responds positively to attention and affection.

Toby needs an experienced family that can provide structure, routine, some redirection, and close supervision at all times. His family should be patient and respond appropriately to his behavioral needs. A two-parent family with a strong extended support system is preferred. (3716MO) *Delaware County*

Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Justin

Justin is fascinated by electronics. He loves visiting websites on the internet and has even designed a few web pages of his own—one is about fire safety. Christmas is his favorite holiday and “Elf” is his favorite movie. He thinks he might have the whole movie memorized! Justin is a friendly, intellectual, and outgoing seventeen-year-old young man. He loves to have conversations and he is very popular among his peers and adults. He enjoys watching television, playing outside, and being on the computer. When he grows up, he would like to work in the film industry, either making films or editing them.

Justin needs a family that can provide stability, structure, and consistency. A patient, loving family with no children or older children would be ideal for Justin. Single-parent and two-parent homes will be considered. (4000IA) *Lake County*



Kristian

Kristian is an energetic and easygoing young man who loves to jump and climb. His favorite activities are playing on the jungle gym, playing in the ball pit, and playing in the water. Kristian, who is fifteen years old, also enjoys spending quiet time cuddled in a blanket and watching a Disney video or having a bright, colorful book read to him. He is very sweet and affectionate little boy. He can feed himself and he is not a picky eater!

Kristian has been making progress with some activities of daily living and responds well to positive rewards. He will need a loving and patient family that will support his growth and provide structure, routine, and close supervision at all times. He would do well in a home that has a large yard to play in, possibly one with a fence. Two-parent homes with good support systems will be preferred. (4016JS) *Allen County*



Sylvester 🎬

Sylvester is a very lovable, calm, and handsome thirteen-year-old boy. In the summer he loves to play in the pool and he enjoys watching the Disney Channel, coloring, and dancing. His favorite movie is “Red Tails” and he enjoys when someone reads to him. Sylvester is bright and maintains good grades in school. Sylvester’s favorite classes are gym, music, and art. He would like to be a policeman when he grows up. When asked where he would like to go someday, he says, “to college.”

Sylvester needs a nurturing family that can provide stability, supervision, and appropriate medical attention. He would greatly benefit from a two-parent home. Sylvester needs a strong male figure who will be consistent with discipline and who is willing to spend a lot of one-on-one time with him. He would do best in a home with only older children. He needs a family with a lot of patience and love to get him through the trauma that he has experienced. Sylvester has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. (4063IA) *Lake County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Brianna 🎥

Brianna is a very sweet and loving sixteen-year-old girl. She very much enjoys one-on-one attention with adults. She is caring and empathic to those she feels are less fortunate. She loves playing with baby dolls and likes to have her hair brushed and styled. Brianna's favorite activities are playing on the playground and doing arts and crafts. She is also very enthusiastic about going swimming! Uno and SKIP-BO are her favorite card games and she hopes to go to the zoo someday.

Brianna needs a family that can give her a lot of care and attention. She needs a nurturing family that will be patient and encourage her to develop to her fullest potential. She would like to have two parents and maybe live in the city. Parents with experience with special needs children are preferred. (4077JS) *St. Joseph County*



Austin

Austin is an inquisitive and friendly thirteen-year-old boy! He likes swimming and running, and her recently started track and field. his favorite event is the distance run. He is very interested in action movies and comic books, his favorite being Spider Man. Austin is also very interested in cause-and-effect relationships and how things work. He enjoys being part of a group, but really thrives with one-on-one adult attention. He enjoys being read to and has a vivid imagination. Austin is very bright and is doing well in school. He wants to work at a vet when he grows up because he likes animals. Austin describes himself as "smart, excited, and cool."

Austin needs a family that can give him a lot of attention while providing structure and close supervision. An adoptive family will need to be patient and committed to providing stability while he works on developing a bond with them. Austin needs to be the youngest or only child in the family. (5002SS) *Tippecanoe County*



Brendan

Brendan is a sweet twelve-year-old boy who is very outgoing, loving, and polite. He has an infectious smile and likes to make others laugh. He enjoys reading about mechanics, but more specifically cars, trucks and trains. Brendan thinks he'd like to be a semi truck driver when he's older. He is a hard worker and enjoys the outdoors, working in the garden, and working with animals. Brendan describes himself as "awesome, kind, and loyal."

Brendan would do best in a two-parent home with no other or older children, and where both parents are strong role models being firm in their roles as mother and father. Parents must provide consistent structure and routine. A strong male figure to teach Brendan and what it's like to have a father would really benefit him. Parents should be patient and demonstrating unconditional love as well as plenty of attention and affection. Brendan likes the outdoors and would like to have active parents who enjoy sports and being outside. He loves animals, especially horses and farm animals. Brendan has a strong desire to be adopted. (5045JS) *Huntington County*



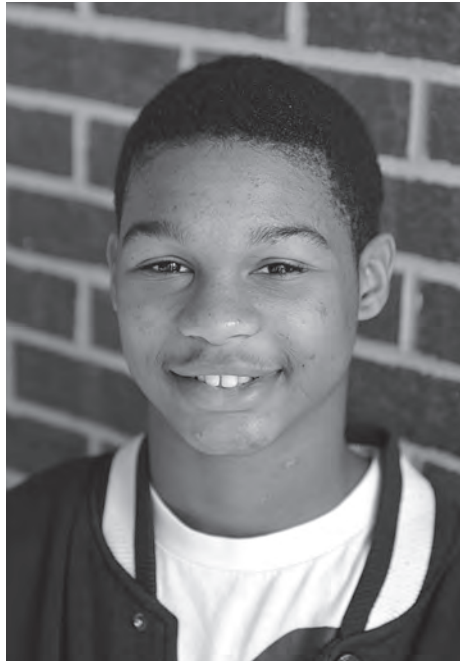
Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Allissa 

Allissa has a great imagination and a sunny disposition. She loves to play sports, especially basketball, football, baseball, and swimming. She has a great voice and will gladly sing for anyone who will listen. Her favorite movie is “The Help” and her favorite color is red. She enjoys reading the Twilight series and she loves to order chicken teriyaki and crab rangoon at Chinese restaurants. She likes animals and hopes to have pets at her new home. She is sixteen years old, she likes animals, and she hopes to have pets at her new home

Allissa needs an active, loving family that can provide structure, consistency, clear boundaries, and realistic expectations. She will need support and encouragement. Both single and two-parent families will be considered. (5086BBD) *Scott County*



Damar

Damar is a creative, engaging young man who is eager to be adopted! He is a friendly, outgoing, and very likeable sixteen-year-old. Damar enjoys music, playing video games, doing computer searches, and shopping at gaming stores. He thinks he might like to design gaming systems and games for a living some day. Damar is looking forward to having a father who will spend time with him doing things like working on electronics, playing video games or going fishing.

Damar needs a loving family that can provide consistent rules, boundaries, and expectations. He is at his best when he has a routine in a stable environment. Damar has a brother with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6004JS) *Allen County*



Shiare 

Shiare, who goes by Shay, is an energetic self-starter. She is a sixteen-year-old who likes to listen to music and dance. Shay likes helping around the house, and would like to learn how to cook. She enjoys attending church and participating in church youth activities. Shay likes school and does well academically. She loves braiding hair and thinks she would like to be a hair stylist when she grows up. She loves to read and journal, and she hopes to see the Divergent films since she is reading the series. She hopes to go to Ball State when she graduates high school. Shay is compassionate and good with children.

Shay needs a supportive, loving family that can provide structure, consistency, as well as clear boundaries and expectations. A patient family that can offer a calm environment would allow Shay to thrive. (6022SS) *Marion County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Alan

Alan's favorite subject is science because he got to build a volcano in his class! Alan loves to talk about the things that excite him, especially LEGOs and Pokémon. Alan's favorite Pokémon is Pikachu and he likes to play with trading cards and virtual games. Alan is an eleven-year-old boy who wants to be an inventor or a video game designer when he grows up. He is very good at building things. Alan loves to sing and his favorite colors are red and orange. He loves dogs of all sizes and he would like to visit Legoland in Chicago someday.

Alan needs a loving, patient family that can nurture him and help him reach his fullest potential. Alan will need a lot of one-on-one attention and his family will need to be willing to take plenty of time for him to adjust to change. Alan does best with structure and routine and it would be best for him to be an only child. He will need plenty of behavioral and emotional support. A two-parent home with a big yard would be beneficial for him. (6056SS) *Marion County*



Helen

Helen is a sweet, creative, bright girl. She is fifteen years old and she likes skateboarding, crocheting, working on the computer, and interacting with others. Helen has a great voice and enjoys singing. She also enjoys attending church and school and she makes good grades. Helen loves caring for animals.

Helen would like to be part of an active, fun-loving family that can give her a lot of time and attention. She relates well to older parents and she would do well with or without siblings in the home. Helen wants to be adopted and wants to be a permanent part of a family. She would do well with positive role models and parents who will encourage her and be examples of healthy relationships. Helen needs a family that can be patient and nurturing while also providing a consistent, stable environment. Helen has siblings with whom she will need to maintain contact. (6071BS) *Vanderburgh County*



Brian

Brian is a friendly fifteen-year-old boy. He has lots of energy and likes to have fun and joke around. Brian thinks he'd like to be a singer, comedian, or actor when he grows up. His favorite comedian is Adam Sandler, and he likes the Grown Ups movies. When asked how he would describe himself, he said "funny and energetic." He likes to play baseball, and played on a team where he plays in the outfield.

Brian thinks that he would like to have both a mom and a dad. He needs loving, energetic parents who can provide plenty of patience, understanding, and a stable environment. Brian needs a family where he will feel loved and accepted. It would be bet if potential families were active in outdoors and/or sports. Brian has siblings with whom he will need to maintain contact. (6085SS) *Marion County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Paul is an honest boy with a wonderful, bright smile. He may take a while to open up to new people, but once he does, he is a lot of fun! Paul is fifteen years old and he likes playing video games, reading Sci-Fi books, and riding his bicycle. He has also expressed an interest in playing piano and learning about virtual design. In his free time, he likes to play basketball with his friends.

Paul needs a loving, committed family and would benefit greatly from having positive adult role models. He will do best with a family that will be supportive, accepting, and encouraging, one that will work on helping him feel comfortable and helping him enjoy his childhood. He will also need plenty of time to adjust to a new setting. A stable homes with structure and consistent rules and consequences would be beneficial for him. Single-parent and two-parent home will be considered. (6089BD)
Madison County



Andrew, who goes by Andy, is sixteen years old and he likes to draw things and then give his drawings to others. He is a bright young man who is very creative, artistic, and athletic. He is very likable and has a good sense of humor. Andy has a great imagination. He can be very kind and giving. Andy loves animals and says his favorite animals are dogs, cats, and bunnies. He likes watching the Colts, building with Legos, and collecting Hot Wheels cars and Bakugans. Andy has an interest in the military and would like to build or design machines someday.

Andy needs a family that can provide clear boundaries and expectations as well as good supervision. He would benefit from having a strong, positive male role model. The family best suited for Andy will be able to commit to spending the time necessary to bond with him and help him feel secure while he heals from past traumas. (7004BS)
Monroe County



Amanuell is a very charming, funny boy who loves to have fun. He especially likes going outside and adventuring, especially if it involves hiking. Amanuell is very good at math and he thinks he would like to be an engineer he grows up. He is very interested in electronics and architecture, and hopes to go to Butler University someday. Amanuell is a hard worker and is proud of his work ethic. His favorite animals are dogs and cats, but he also likes dinosaurs. Amanuell really enjoys sports and hopes to learn how to play lacrosse someday.

Amanuell would love to be part of a family that enjoys outdoor activities, sports, and traveling. He would like to have a younger brother or siblings about his age, which is fourteen. He has stated he wants a home where the parents will listen to him. Amanuell would benefit from being in a two-parent home that can offer him love, attention, stability, and structure. Amanuell is very loving and caring and is eager to call someone mom and dad. Single parent families will also be considered. (7015SS)
Marion County

Indiana Adoption Program



Da'Jaion 🎥

Da'Jaion has a cheerful demeanor and a contagious laugh! He is fourteen years old and he enjoys playing with small toys, especially ones with lights, sounds, or music. His favorite toy is a tambourine in the shape of a turtle. While he cannot walk independently, Da'Jaion utilizes a wheelchair and a stander. He is able to scoot around on the floor and can cover ground pretty quickly! Da'Jaion can drink from a sippy cup and feed himself finger foods. His favorite food is probably Cheetos.

Da'Jaion needs a loving family that can provide 24-hour supervision and total care for him. Families with knowledge and experience with special needs children are preferred. (7016JS) *Allen County*



Nate

Nate is a personable and helpful fourteen-year-old boy. He is very inquisitive and likes to know how things work. He loves outdoor activities such as fishing and baseball. Nate likes animals and is very gentle with them. He is very interested in reptiles, snakes being one of his favorite animals. Nate is very intelligent and enjoys school and learning different things. Nate thinks he'd like to travel to Japan someday because he's curious about Japanese culture. When he grows up, Nate thinks he wants to be a dermatologist because he wants to help people. Nate collects model cars and business cards.

Nate is looking forward to being adopted and is eager to have a family. He wants parents that are nice. He will do best in a stable, consistent, and caring environment with an established routine. Potential parents should be loving and patient. It would be best if there were no other children in the home. Both single and two-parent homes will be considered. (7025SS) *Marion County*



Vincent 🎥

Vincent is a sweet twelve-year-old boy who is an energetic people pleaser. He makes friends easily and enjoys church and school. Vincent is very creative and likes to design and build things. He loves LEGOs! He'll gladly tell you about the times he's been to LEGOLAND, the LEGO movie, and all the things he is building. His favorite season is summer because he likes to be outside. Vincent is a helpful and respectful boy who is polite and very loveable. He can be shy when you first meet him, but when he opens up, Vincent is a lot of fun! Vincent describes his ideal home as having two parents and a couple of older brothers. He would also like to have pets because he likes animals.

A home that would be best for Vincent would be a loving and patient family with parenting experience. A family with the knowledge on how trauma affects children would be helpful. Vincent needs parents who are nurturing and able to provide, structure, stability, and safety. Vincent does well when he has positive influences around him and would benefit from having a strong male role model. A family that will be committed to Vincent and show unconditional love towards him would allow him to thrive. (7029BBD) *Clark County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Emily

Emily likes to go to the park and play on the swings. Her foster mother describes her as, “the sweetest little girl in the world!” Emily is unselfish and generous and likes to help others. She likes school and says her favorite subjects are reading, math, and free time. Emily is thirteen years old and she likes to play matching games, read rhyming books, sing, and play outdoors. She describes herself as, “nice, thoughtful, and only silly a little tiny bit.” She wants to play soccer and be a cheerleader someday. When she grows up, Emily wants to be a police officer because, “they are nice and they help people and they wear police hats and drive police cars.”

Emily is an affectionate little girl who needs a family that can provide structure, consistent rules and consequences, support, and encouragement. She would like a mom and a dad and she prefers to have no animals in the home. Emily has siblings with whom she will need to maintain contact. (7041JS) *Allen County*



Joshuah

Josh is looking forward to being part of a family that will enjoy spending time with him. He likes going to new places and he wants to visit Africa someday. Josh is fifteen years old and he loves playing catch and watching television. His favorite subject in school is science “because it is so fun!” He enjoys playing video games, playing outdoors, and wrestling. He wants to be a famous wrestler when he grows up. Josh also likes drawing and playing with toy cars and action figures. He thinks he would like to take martial arts or kung fu lessons.

Although Josh would love to have a mom and a dad, he would also be open to a single-parent family. He enjoys attending church and participating in church life. Josh needs a loving family that can provide structure, clear boundaries, and close supervision. (7045JS) *Allen County*



Breion

Breion would love to have a pet Komodo dragon, which he would name “Awesome.” Breion has an active imagination and loves to create art and draw pictures. He is sixteen years old and he hopes to design computer games for a living when he grows up. Breion has a very strong sense of determination and likes to be able to try new things. He would love to go surfing in California someday. Breion spends his days playing basketball and paintball, swimming, and making new friends. He also really enjoys jumping on the trampoline and shopping. Chips are his favorite thing to purchase.

Breion is an easygoing child who likes to talk, be listened to, and feel as though what he says matters. Breion would benefit from a two-parent home with a strong father figure and a structured, consistent schedule. (80061A) *Lake County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Justin 🎥

Justin is a very sweet-natured sixteen-year-old boy. He has a great sense of humor and a great smile. He loves martial arts! “Karate Kid” is his favorite movie and he will happily show off the karate moves he learned from the movie to anyone who will watch. He hopes to one day take martial arts classes. Justin takes pride in accomplishing new things. He would like to play on a softball team during the summer and he would love to learn Chinese.

Justin enjoys activities that help him grow and develop. With assistance, he is able to identify and complete tasks that he needs to complete. Justin would like to maintain contact with his brothers and current foster parents. He is very loving and caring towards his siblings and caregivers and he has a close bond with his friends and family. He hopes to have a big brother in his new home. (8008BS) *Vanderburgh County*



Avery

Avery is an active five-year-old with a happy disposition and a ready smile. He enjoys animals and spending time outside. Avery appears very excited to watch his foster family’s chickens and their cat. He likes to put puzzles together and enjoys participating in home-based pre-school. Avery also enjoys music and watching TV programs. He especially likes to watch “Sophia the First” which is on the Disney Channel. Avery loves to interact with others. He is described as bubbly and a lot of fun.

Avery is a very sweet little boy who needs a family that is committed to him and his many medical challenges. It would be beneficial to have a family that is familiar with parenting a child with special needs. Families with an excellent support system and knowledge of developmental delays and medical needs are preferred. It would be recommended that the family be familiar with or willing to learn sign language as this would allow the family to communicate with Avery. (8039JS) *Allen County*



Cassie 🎥

Cassie loves animals and would especially like to have a Siberian Husky. She would name her dog Diamond or Scooby after the cartoon. Cassie is fifteen years old and enjoys listening to hip hop music, reading, drawing, bike riding, swimming, swinging at the park, shopping, and dancing. Cassie is kind and soft-spoken. She shares smiles readily and enjoys laughing. When Cassie grows up, her goal is to become a veterinarian. Her favorite class in school is science. Cassie would like to be able to visit Disney World someday and attend a Justin Bieber concert. Cassie enjoys going to church and would like to live with a family that attends on a regular basis.

More than anything, Cassie wants to be part of a family and she needs a home where she will be accepted and loved. Cassie would do well in a one-parent or two-parent home, and she also does well with older or younger siblings, or as an only child. Cassie would like to live in the city and she will need parents who can provide her with clear boundaries and unconditional love and acceptance. (8051JS) *Allen County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Brandon

Brandon is a charming and fun-loving child. He likes to play basketball, football, and baseball. He prefers to be outdoors and loves going to parks to ride bikes, skateboard, or go for walks. Brandon is fifteen years old and he would like to be a truck driver someday because he likes to travel. If he could pick a place to go on a vacation, he would choose Georgia. He also hopes to have a pet gerbil at his new home.

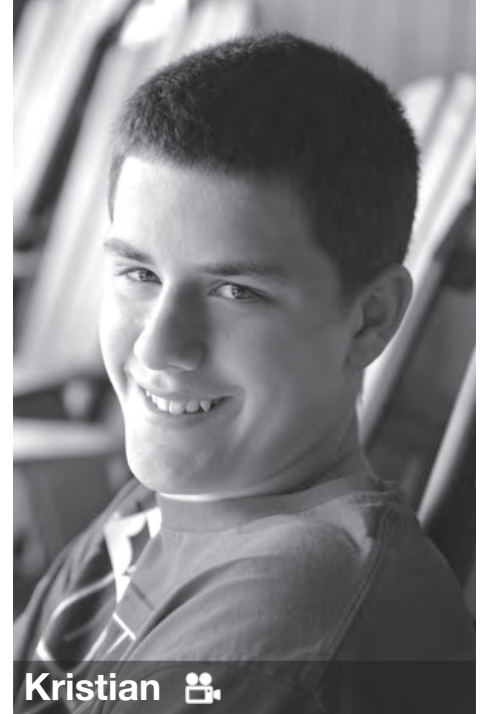
Brandon needs a family that will provide structure for him and understand how to best meet his educational and emotional needs. He would do well in a two-parent home with older siblings. (8067MO) *Jay County*



Caleb 

Caleb is a very loyal friend. He makes friends easily and he enjoys telling jokes and making other people laugh. He is compassionate and caring and will defend those he feels are being mistreated. Caleb is fifteen years old and he enjoys video games and watching movies. He is proud to be left-handed because he feels it makes him a better basketball player. He has a desire to succeed in life and works hard to achieve his goals. He would like to be a cop when he grows up so that he can, "help the world out." He hopes to visit Chicago someday to see the Chicago Bulls play.

Caleb would like to have older siblings. He would prefer to live with a single mother who is African-American, but two-parent homes will be considered as well. He needs a patient family that understands the importance of healing and will advocate for his education. He needs love, stability, and a sense of security. He would do well in a structured environment with firm boundaries. (8070BS) *Vanderburgh County*



Kristian 

Kristian wants to play basketball for the Miami Heat when he grows up. He is fifteen years old and he loves to play point guard and when he plays football, he likes to be the quarterback. Kristian describes himself as, "caring, loving, and athletic." He is also helpful and nice. He recently read the first book in the Hunger Games series and he would like to read the other two books. His favorite subject is math and he received an award for being the "Most Polite Student." His favorite food is pizza and he likes all toppings except anchovies. He would like to visit Miami, Florida some day because he wants to see a Heat game and also because he has never seen a beach before.

Kristian needs a home where he can have strong, positive role models. He needs a family that will encourage positive behavior and help him succeed in school. Kristian needs a family that will be strict with their supervision, but also provide him with unconditional love. His adoptive family must establish rules and implement discipline from the very beginning. Kristian says that he would like a family that is "clean and nice." He would do well in a single-parent or two-parent home with older children or no other children. He has siblings with whom he would like to remain in contact. (8095MO) *Jefferson County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Aniya

Aniya wants to be a nurse when she grows up so that she can help others. She is thirteen years old and her favorite thing about herself is that she is “pretty and smart.” Aniya likes science and she enjoys drawing and other artistic activities. She likes to read, especially the Hunger Games books. She loves being in school plays and likes to try out for different parts that include singing, dancing, and speaking. Some of her favorite activities are going to the mall, seeing movies, having picnics, getting her hair done, drawing, and being active.

Aniya has a strong desire to be part of a home that can provide consistency and very clear expectations and rules. She needs a loving and patient family that can help her deal with the loss she has experienced. She would benefit from being the youngest or only child in the home, but homes with younger children will be considered too. Both single-parent and two-parent homes will be considered. (8097SS) *Marion County*



Briestyn 

Briestyn loves animals, 4-wheelers, and his bike. He prefers to be outdoors, but he also loves to play Xbox games and watch cartoons or movies. Briestyn is very good at reading and spelling. He is a humorous eleven-year-old boy and can be compassionate and caring, especially when working with the elderly. Briestyn is eager to try new things. His favorite movie is “Real Steel.” Briestyn likes football and would like to play running back on a team someday. He is an intelligent, funny, and energetic ten year-old boy.

Briestyn will do best in a two-parent home with an extensive support system and parenting experience. His family will need to provide close supervision and plenty of one-on-one attention. He needs a family that is encouraging, strong, and patient, to help him overcome his intense emotional and behavioral needs. It would be best if Briestyn were the only or youngest child. (8106DH) *Vermillion County*



Kenneth 

Kenneth is a very friendly, fun-loving child with a big personality and a big smile. He loves to make other people happy and he is a good helper. Kenneth is thirteen years old and he loves to dance. His favorite song to dance to is “We Will Rock You” by Queen. McDonald’s is his favorite restaurant because he loves their cheeseburgers and fries. He loves to play on electronics, especially playing “phone call” on real phones. He is good at computer games that involve picture or letter matching. He also loves the Angry Birds game.

Kenneth needs a family that is ready to be completely invested in his growth. His family will need to understand his limitations and work with him to achieve his greatest potential. Kenneth needs a home that can provide supervision and continued medical services. His family will need to advocate for him educationally. Two-parent families with older or no other children will be preferred. (8108BD) *Jennings County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**




Micheal

Micheal is a bright, well-spoken, and thoughtful boy. He is also energetic and athletic and he loves to play basketball. Micheal is seventeen years old and his favorite activities are reading, listening to music, and playing video games. He is often described as helpful and kind and loves to help others. He cares very much for his sister and he hopes to maintain contact with her.

Micheal needs a home where he can have a strong, positive male role model. He needs an encouraging, supportive family that can provide necessary boundaries, supervision, and educational support, as well as love and acceptance. Single-parent and two-parent homes with older or no other children will be preferred. (8109JS) *Allen County*



Bryan 

Bryan is a funny, pleasant twelve-year-old boy who loves LEGOs. He likes to build spaceships and cars and he hopes to enter LEGO building competitions. He thinks he would like to do auto mechanics or racing when he grows up. Bryan loves to read fantasy books like “The Hobbit” and watch movies like “Star Wars.” He also likes to ride bicycles and read books about BMX. He hopes to drive a Dodge car or truck when he gets older and he thinks he would like to go to Minnesota to see the Mall of America someday.

Bryan will need a family that can provide supervision, safety, appropriate boundaries, and a good model for behavior. He would benefit from having a family that encourages and supports him in his emotional and educational growth. Single or two-parent homes with older children or no other children will be considered. (8133BS) *Greene County*



Nicole

Nicole is a very gentle and sweet young girl. Though Nicole does not speak, she does smile. She is seventeen years old and she likes to hear music, especially songs for children. She also enjoys having a roommate. She loves interactions with people and also loves objects that light up or make noise. She enjoys toys that stimulate her senses.

Nicole will need a family with an extended support system since she needs 24/7 care. She also needs parents who are willing and able to provide care for her many medical and physical needs. Families that are familiar with cerebral palsy would be preferred. Single-parent and two-parent homes will be considered. (8141BD) *Madison County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Jonathan 🎥

Jonathan is a friendly, adventurous child who loves to play outside. He is twelve years old and he enjoys interacting with adults and he likes to go to parks. He says his favorite thing to do is, "walk!" His favorite books are ones with pictures in them and he likes to write in his notebook. He likes his teachers and he is learning life skills in school. Jonathan works very hard to be as independent as he can be and he is making great strides. He has learned how to tie his shoes, how to be patient, and how to show empathy for others. His favorite animal is a koala, but he also likes big dogs.

A family with a consistent schedule and a calm environment would be best for Jonathan. He needs a single-parent or two-parent home with a family that can provide supervision, encouragement, and attention to his medical and educational needs. Jonathan does well with other children and pets. (8149IA) *Newton County*



Everett 🎥

Everett has a kind smile and a contagious laugh. He is sixteen years old. He is caring and he enjoys spending one-on-one time with people. He loves to play basketball and video games. Writing is his favorite subject in school. He is quiet at first, but very friendly once he opens up to a person. He is a resilient boy and he is working hard to achieve his goals. He would do well with positive role models who can encourage him to continue meeting his emotional, behavioral, and educational goals.

Everett would do well in a family where he can be an only child and where the people around him are positive, optimistic, grounded, and nurturing. He needs direction and purpose in his life. He would do best in a stable and structured environment with a family that will support him, understand him, and be patient with him. This family will need to work closely with Everett while he continues to deal with and understand his difficult past. (8151IA) *Lake County*



Austin 🎥

Austin is a friendly, imaginative, and determined seventeen-year-old who loves all outdoor activities. He likes to work with his hands and enjoys watching motorcycle racing, learning mechanics, and working on his bike. Austin would like to attend college or vocational school to learn how to work on engines and he hopes to either drive a truck someday, become a diesel mechanic, or live on a ranch. He would love to learn how to drive. Austin would also like to learn about photography. Austin has a great sense of humor and is very personable.

Austin hopes that he will find a home with a family that wants a teenage boy. And if the home were in the country, he would be very happy. He very much wants to have a forever family. It would be beneficial for Austin to have a positive male role model. A home with a single father where Austin could be the only child would be best. (8158BS) *Owen County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**




Charles

Charles is an active child! Coloring and drawing are his favorite hobbies. He is eight years old and he likes to dance for fun. He enjoys watching television and playing with his sisters. Charles is making great strides academically and will need someone to continue to advocate for him.

Charles would do well in a loving two-parent home with parents who are firm, but fair. He will need supervision and parents who can provide stability, patience, and security. He is learning the importance of family and he wants to be adopted. He would enjoy being in a home that has a dog. (8161CIA) *Lake County*



Brianna 

Brianna loves pop music. She has never been to a concert, but she would love to go to one, especially a Lady Gaga show. Brianna is seventeen years old and she describes herself as, “a dork in a good way,” because of her love for reading and history. When she grows up, she would like to be a famous singer or actress; she thinks it would be fun to have cameras follow her. Brianna is building up a collection of nail polish and she wants to visit a lot of places someday, such as Chicago, Rio De Janeiro, Greece, Italy, and Washington D.C.

Brianna would prefer to live in a home with a single mother. She needs a strong, positive, stable role model who can mentor her and help her focus on her future. She also loves animals and would like to live in a home with pets. Brianna’s new family will need to provide constant encouragement and advocate for her education and emotional needs. (8162SS) *Marion County*



Garrett 

Garrett is intelligent and polite. He is a skilled builder and enjoys mechanics. Garrett is a very active sixteen-year-old who likes spending time outdoors. Some of the sports he enjoys are cycling and basketball, and he hopes to be on the track team someday. Garrett is positive and bright and sets goals for himself to reach his full potential.

Garrett would do best in a two-parent home with a strong male role model and no younger siblings. He would benefit the most in a home with clear boundaries, supervision, and plenty of love. (8167BD) *Scott County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Daniel 

Daniel is good-natured and affectionate. He is personable, polite, and well-mannered, and gets along very well with adults. Daniel is fifteen years old. He has a wonderful sense of humor, and likes to tell knock-knock jokes. Daniel is athletic and competitive. He enjoys playing basketball, football, boxing, and hockey. Daniel is thoughtful and caring and yearns for love and affection from others.

Daniel would thrive in a two-parent home with parents who have experience with kids with special needs. He'll do best in a home with a calm, nurturing, and loving environment and parents that can advocate for his emotional and educational needs. (8168BD) *Clark County*



Charles 

Charles, who goes by Charlie, is a sweet, talkative young man who is fascinated by cars and racing. He enjoys playing video games like Need For Speed. His favorite car is the Dodge Charger, and his favorite NASCAR driver is Jeff Gordon. He really likes animals, especially cats and bunnies. Charlie, who is sixteen years old, likes to stay active and enjoys baseball. He describes himself as, "awesome, funny, and protective." He is caring and very helpful.

Charlie wants an active mom and dad who "like racing and don't fight." He stated that he has always wanted a little brother. He would like to be the oldest child. Charlie would benefit from calm parents who can set clear guidelines, and maintain structure and firm boundaries. He will need a lot of direct attention and guidance. Charlie is caring and energetic. Charlie desires to be in a loving home. (8183SS) *Marion County*



Christina 

Christina, who goes by Chrissy, is very hopeful that she will find a forever family. She is so excited to possibly play family games, eat dinner together, and maybe even travel with them. She is sixteen years old and she hopes to have younger siblings to play with, or to be an only child. Chrissy loves animals, especially smaller dogs, cats, and hamsters and would like to live in a home with animals. She is an active, outgoing, and friendly girl who likes the outdoors. She likes to play volleyball at school, and hopes to one day be on a gymnastics team. Chrissy's favorite subject in school is history because she likes to learn about how the past has impacted the present.

Chrissy is very eager to be adopted and would like a loving home who is caring and listens to her. Christina would do best in a patient, understanding home that can give her plenty of attention. Chrissy has some dietary limitations, so parents should take this into consideration. Chrissy is a loving child who is easy to get along with and who loves to smile. (8185DH) *Putnam County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Trevor

Trevor is a well-humored boy who is interested in reading, video games, playing with action figures, and building things. He enjoys writing, and is doing well in school and enjoys it. Trevor is curious and has a desire to try new things and an interest in learning about anything and everything. Trevor is seventeen years old and he likes to make friends and please others. When Trevor puts his mind to doing well, he is capable of achieving his goals. Overall, Trevor is pleasant to be around.

A home that is nurturing, consistent, and can provide stability would be best for Trevor. The family will need to encourage him and focus on positive change so he may achieve his potential. A home with adequate supervision, guidance, and plenty of patience would be best for Trevor. (8197AKY) *Allen County*



Jacob

Jacob is fourteen and loves reading, playing outside, and fishing. He appears shy and reserved when you first meet him, but he will open up as he gets to know you. One of his favorite cartoons on TV is Adventure Time. He has a wonderful sense of humor. He is wonderful to be around and very resilient. Jacob has a desire to be in a family.

A home that is nurturing, consistent, and can provide stability would be best for Jacob. The family will need to encourage him and focus on positive change so he may achieve his potential. A home with adequate supervision, guidance, and plenty of patience would be best for Jacob. (8197BKY) *Allen County*



Chase 🎥

Chase, who is fifteen, is an easy-going boy with a great sense of humor. He plays guitar and is in a band with a few of his friends! Chase likes animals, especially cows and horses. If he could have a dog, he would have a Chihuahua. He likes being around adults, is very sociable, and can be very helpful. Chase likes video games, and his favorite game for Xbox is one where you race dirt bikes. Chase has done well at school in reading and spelling. Football is his favorite sport. He loves to stay active and enjoys playing sports outside. Chase tries hard to be successful, and has a desire to be adopted.

Chase would benefit from a two-parent home with no other children so the parents could give him plenty of positive attention. Families should be consistent, calm, and able to maintain a stable environment with adequate supervision. Parents should be willing to advocate for his emotional wellbeing. A slow transition into an adoptive home would be best for Chase. (8203BD) *Hamilton County*

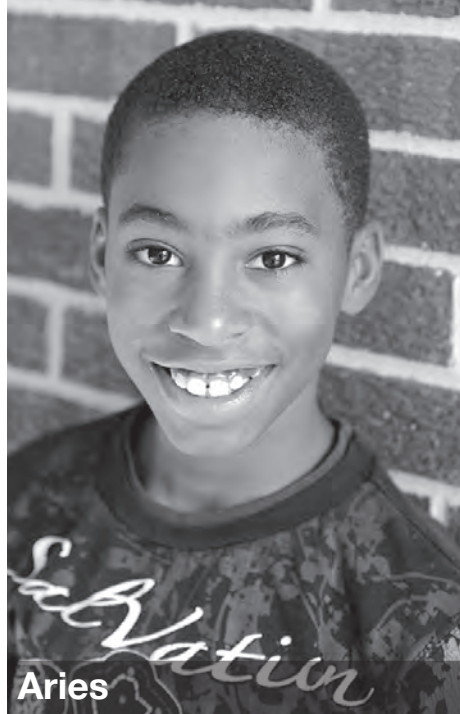
Indiana Adoption Program



Jesse 🎥

Jesse is a friendly and inquisitive ten-year-old boy who loves to be active and outdoors. When you first meet him, he is very outgoing and polite. Jesse is very helpful and takes pride in his work. Jesse is independent and likes to try new things. Jesse's favorite sport is football and he likes to play as quarterback. If the opportunity arises, Jesse has a humorous personality that can light up a room! Jesse is a happy and sweet young man who is optimistic and hopeful about the future.

Jesse is excited to be adopted and he hopes his future home has lots of animals. He would like to have older siblings—an older brother and an older sister. Jesse would do best in a two-parent home that can provide lots of attention and reassurance. He would benefit from having a father and/or older brother who can be strong role models. Jesse needs a home that can provide safety, stability, and unconditional love. (8204MO) *Jefferson County*



Aries

Aries is a polite boy with a great smile! He is an active eleven-year-old boy who likes to play sports such as football, basketball, and running. He enjoys video games, puzzles, and board games. Aries has a big imagination and is very creative. He can be shy when you first meet him, but once he opens up, he is sociable and enjoyable to be around.

The home best for Aries would be a two-parent home with older children or no other children. Aries thrives on one-on-one attention. A home that is calm and nurturing with stability would be ideal for Aries. He will need support, structure, and guidance. Having a strong male role model in the home would be good for Aries. Aries is a resilient boy, yet will need a slow transition into an adoptive home. (8205JS) *Allen County*



Isaiah

Isaiah is a sweet fourteen-year-old boy who loves cars! Some of his favorites are the Dodge Charger and the Chevy Camaro. He likes to go for car rides and work on cars. He is kind, polite, and affectionate. Isaiah is helpful and enjoys cleaning. Isaiah is an active boy who likes to play outside. He likes baseball and basketball. Isaiah is sociable and likes to be around people.

Isaiah would do best in a two-parent home with lots of structure and clear boundaries. It would be best if there are children in the home, that they would be older. Isaiah loves attention and will need supervision. A home with a calm environment and caring, affectionate parents would allow Isaiah to thrive. (8206JS) *Wells County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Randy

Randy is a shy, but personable ten-year-old boy. He loves animals, especially cats! He describes himself as happy. He really likes vegetables, so his favorite meal is a salad from Olive Garden. In his spare time, he likes to paint and draw as well as play with Legos. He really likes Marvel comics, particularly The Avengers. Randy likes to play outside. Football and basketball are the sports he enjoys best. His three wishes are to be a super hero, to have every super-power, and to have a million dollars. If he could go anywhere in the world, he would go to Hollywood or China!

Randy needs to be placed in an adoptive home that is understanding, calm, and nurturing. Positive reinforcement is best for Randy. Randy tries hard and wants to succeed, and a family that can encourage him to reach his potential would be best for him. Parents should be flexible, and able to show unconditional love. (8207DH) *Wabash County*



Chloe

Chloe is a spirited, expressive, and loving girl who is can be shy when you first meet her, but will open up quickly. She describes herself as “someone who likes to have fun.” She is sixteen years old and is a good helper. She enjoys one-on-one time. Chloe likes fashion and her favorite store is Rue 21 and wishes she could work there. When Chloe is older, she hopes to become a lawyer because she wants to help “good people.” Chloe likes to hang out and joke around with her friends. When she and her friends get together, they play dancing games on the Wii. She is active and likes to swim and play volleyball.

A home that would be best for Chloe is a patient two-parent home with that can provide safety, appropriate boundaries, and clear rules and expectations. Chloe needs parents who will be good advocates for her emotional and educational needs. She has a strong desire to find a forever family. (8218BS) *Crawford County*



Ethen

Ethen is a curious thirteen-year-old boy who loves the outdoors. He likes to hike and look at wildlife. His two favorite animals are snakes and spiders. Ethen is bright, funny, and helpful as well as a people pleaser, enjoying time spent with adults. He has a desire to write neatly and spell correctly. Ethen easily gets interested in new things and would likely enjoy participating in any hobbies prospective families may enjoy. Ethen is a sweet, affectionate, and bright boy.

An active, nurturing home that can provide adequate supervision would be best for Ethen. Prospective parents will need to maintain a structured and safe environment with consistent routine. If there are children in the home, it would be best if they are older. Families should be prepared to advocate for his emotional and educational needs. (8224BS) *Daviess County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Joshua is a happy eleven-year-old boy with a bright smile. He is sweet, affectionate, and likes being tickled and also likes to cuddle. Joshua is active enjoys swimming and he enjoys bubbles. He also likes playing tag! He loves to watch TV and his favorite show is "Barney."

Joshua will do best in a two-parent home that can provide adequate supervision and a safe environment. Families should have a support network to help in caring for Joshua, as well as preparation to be an advocate for his emotional and educational needs. Potential parents will need to be patient, understanding, and active. (8225IA) *La Porte County*



Jaden is a curious nine-year-old boy who likes to explore and be active. He likes to spend time outside riding his bike. When he is inside, you can find him building LEGOs, or playing a racing video game. Jaden is fascinated by how things work, so he likes to take things apart and put them back together again. Jaden is athletic, artistic, and well-mannered. Jaden is a bit of a daredevil and hopes to be a race car driver someday.

Jaden would do best in a two-parent home with no other children. He needs a home that can provide plenty of love, stability, and safety. It is important that the parents have some knowledge on how trauma affects children. Parents should be strong, showing unconditional love, encouragement, and positive redirection. (8228BS) *Perry County*



Ronald, who goes by Matthew, is a sweet, happy thirteen-year-old boy. His smile can brighten a room! He loves electronics, cell phones, iPads, video games, and magazines. Matthew is very caring and gentle with children who are younger than he is and he stands up for others when he feels like they are being hurt. Matthew is proud of his achievements at school and he enjoys showing off his completed homework. He is working on identifying letters, addition and subtraction, and counting currency. He helps out with chores and loves to earn time on the computer.

Matthew will need the support of loving parents who will help him regulate his emotions and behaviors. He would do well in a home where he can be an only child, however, Matthew would love to be a big brother. Two-parent families with a strong support system, a knowledge of special needs, and a willingness to commit to Matthew's emotional health would be very beneficial. (8229BS) *Vanderburgh County*

Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Joshua 🎥

Joshua is a polite, active twelve-year-old boy who loves video games, matchbox cars, LEGOs, and playing outdoors. He enjoys playing with other children his age. Joshua loves playing basketball and baseball. He's got a big smile and likes to be around people. Joshua is doing well in school and enjoys going to classes. He has a healthy appetite—his favorite foods being bacon, pizza, and spaghetti.

An ideal home for Joshua is a calm, nurturing two-parent home where a positive relationship is modeled. It would be best if he was in a home with no younger children. Parents will need to be patient and have the ability to advocate for his emotional and educational needs. (8232IA) *La Porte County*



Aaron

Aaron is a fun, easy-going fifteen-year-old boy who loves the Green Bay Packers. His three wishes are to go to Green Bay, meet Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers, and have a mansion with Packers memorabilia. Aaron describes himself as “awesome” and “a good friend.” He likes to watch crime dramas on TV, such as NCIS. Aaron likes listening to country music, and his favorite bands are The Band Perry, Florida Georgia Line, and Luke Bryan. When he thinks about what he wants in a future home, he wants parents that share his interests.

A home best for Aaron would be patient and understanding with older or no children in the home. Aaron has a high need for structure, routine, and consistency. Aaron is outgoing, funny, and helpful, and would do well in a loving home that can advocate for his education and emotional needs. (8234IA) *La Porte County*



Alyssa

Alyssa is a nice fourteen-year-old girl who is fascinated by Japanese culture. She hopes to visit there someday, and love Japanese animation. Her favorite cartoon is Pokemon, and she enjoys the trading cards and video games. Alyssa describes herself as creative, and art is her favorite subject in school. Alyssa loves animals, so when she is older, she wants to be a zookeeper. Her perfect Friday night would be quiet, spent at home drawing or playing Pokemon games.

A home that would be best for Alyssa would be open to supportive services to assist her with educational and emotional needs. Parents should be caring, patient, and calm with the ability to provide structure and close supervision. Alyssa would like to live in a big house with lots of animals! (8236JS) *Allen County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Andrew

Andrew is a personable thirteen-year-old boy who is very interested in cars, especially Dodges. When he is older, he hopes to be a car salesman. Andrew likes to read and describes himself as “kind of quiet” and “nice.” In his free time, he likes to play board games like Monopoly and Trouble. Andrew is friendly, loving, and affectionate and likes to please others. He likes to be helpful and work hard. He also likes to laugh and has a good sense of humor.

Andrew would do best in a home that can provide a lot of one-on-one attention. He would also do best in a home as the youngest or only child. His family would need to be able to identify his needs and remain dedicated to maintaining a calm, structured, and positive environment. Parents will need to be advocates for Andrew’s educational and emotional needs. (8237JS) *Allen County*



Jabrill

Jabrill is an articulate and engaging eleven-year-old boy! He likes action and sports video games and will eagerly tell you all about them. In his free time, he likes to play football and do putt putt golf. He describes himself as “kind and smart,” and his favorite thing about his personality is that he’s helpful. Jabrill likes all kinds of music, but church and country music are his favorite.

A home that would be best for Jabrill is one that can provide consistent, positive attention and redirection. A patient family that can provide plenty of one-on-one attention would be beneficial for Jabrill. He is eager to find a forever home that can provide a safe, nurturing environment (8242JS) *Allen County*



Noah 🎥

Noah is a sweet and caring eleven-year-old boy. He is very bright, and enjoys school very much. He likes to camp and spend time outdoors. Noah’s favorite sports are basketball and football. He enjoys drawing and is pretty good at drawing superheroes. His favorite Super Hero is Captain America. For fun, Noah likes to fish, skate, or ride his bike. Noah can be kind and helpful with his peers.

The home that would be best for Noah is a family can provide good one-on-one attention. He would do well in a home that is well structured, but not terribly busy. Parents that are positive and nurturing would be ideal for Noah. He would like a home that is family-oriented. A home that is patient, calm, and can provide consistent routine would be best for Noah. (8248BS) *Gibson County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Justin 🎥

Dagher, who prefers to be called Justin, hopes that one day he can watch a rocket launch! Justin is shy at first, but when he opens up, he is quite adventurous. He is eleven years old and he loves to travel. He also loves animals, cars, and playing outside. Dogs are his favorite and he really hopes his new home will have pets. When he grows up, Justin would like to be a police officer. Justin likes math because it comes easy to him. He enjoys playing soccer, video games, and basketball.

Justin would do well in a single-parent or two-parent home. If there are siblings in the home, it would help if Justin could be the youngest child. He needs a family that can provide him with one-on-one attention. He also would benefit from having an advocate for his education. Justin is a very respectful, loving, sweet child. (8251JS) *Allen County*



Jamarion

Jamarion is an energetic seven-year-old boy who loves staying active by playing basketball and football. He is an ambitious and shows little hesitation in trying new things. Jamarion is bright and creative and enjoys making arts and crafts. He is also on the A/B Honor Roll! He is sweet and loving and enjoys making friends. Jamarion likes to play video games and play with other children. He is friendly, does well in school, is social, and likes to try new fun activities.

Jamarion has a desire to be a part of a family. He would do best in a two-parent home that can provide adequate supervision. He would benefit from a strong male role model. He will need to keep in touch with his biological family after he is adopted. A home that would allow Jamarion to thrive would be supportive and can provide consistent structure, unconditional positive regard, affection, and the opportunity to grow emotionally, educationally, and form relationships that will be lifelong. (8253IA) *Lake County*



Sean 🎥

Sean is an active and friendly nine-year-old boy. Sean enjoys playing video games on his Play Station. His favorite games are racing games. Sean will proudly show off his favorite toy: A remote control dinosaur. He also enjoys playing with the other children at home and at school. Sean is a very caring and loving child and is eager to please. He is more open to trying new things and is doing well in school. Sean has a growing sense of mastery over his world and has begun to approach activities with excitement.

Sean would do best in a home with two parents who have a large support network. Parents will need to be able to provide adequate supervision as well as positive redirection. Potential parents will need to advocate for Sean's educational and emotional needs. Sean does well with other children and enjoys being around other people. (8254JS) *Allen County*

Indiana Adoption Program



Joey

Joey is a bright seventeen-year-old boy who loves to build things. He enjoys playing with Legos and will proudly tell you about his collection. Joey is a big Marvel comic book fan, and he enjoys drawing his favorite Marvel characters. He has a creative spirit, and art is one of his favorite subjects in school. Joey enjoys reading, and likes fantasy and science fiction books. His favorite thing about himself is his creativity. When he grows up, he wants to be an auto designer or a mechanic.

Joey would do best in a single or two-parent household with no other children. If there are other children, they should be older. Joey would thrive if he had a strong, nurturing male role-model who could offer Joey plenty of one-on-one attention. Joey responds well to lots of encouragement and would benefit being in a positive environment. It would be best if parents are able to provide consistent structure and supervision for Joey. Joey needs a structure home with consistent rules, expectations, and consequences. He can be sensitive at times and will need assurance and direction. (8258JS) *Allen County*



Dillen 🎥

Dillen is a sweet fourteen-year-old boy who enjoys his action figure collection. He has a few How to Train Your Dragon figures that he proudly will show you! Dillen is polite and loves going to school. He enjoys being outside, and likes to ride his bike and play basketball. Dillen can be very insightful and has a strong desire to succeed. Dillen is pleasant to be around and is well-mannered.

A family that would be best for Dillen would be understanding and patient. Dillen would do best with plenty of guidance and supervision. Dillen will thrive in an environment that is safe and nurturing and can provide plenty of one-on-one attention. He would do well with a strong, positive male role-model. (8260BD) *Johnson County*



Kittiarra 🎥

Kittiarra, who goes by Kitty, is a bright and engaging fourteen-year-old girl. She enjoys reading very much and loves fantasy and science fiction novels. Kitty wants to go to college and hopes to study history or archeology. She does well in school and has always made good grades. Kitty is good with children and the elderly and has a helpful, caring heart. She has a strong desire to be a part of a family.

The home that would be best for Kitty would be structured and nurturing. If there are other children, it would best for her to be in a two-parent home. She would prefer to live in the country, but a town with a good school district is what matters to her. Parents will need to advocate for continued emotional services for Kitty. Parents will need to be patient and loving. (8263JS) *Wells County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Cymia 🎥

Cymia is a sweet eight-year-old girl who has a big smile and loves to play! She has a big heart and likes to help others. She enjoys playing with children and adults. Cymia likes to play with her dolls, but loves to play outside and climb trees. Cymia loves school and has been making great strides in learning math and language. She is quick-witted and loves to tell a joke! Her favorite place to be is outside, especially the beach.

A patient two-parent home that can provide a safe and structured environment would be best for Cymia. Families with knowledge on how trauma effects behaviors would be helpful. Cymia needs a family that will advocate for her emotional and educational needs. A transition into an adoptive home will need to be slow. Cymia needs a family that can establish clear expectations, set boundaries, and model appropriate behaviors. She responds well to positive reinforcement and verbal praise. Cymia has a sibling with whom she'll need to remain in contact. (8265BD) *Hamilton County*



Keyshawnna

Keyshawnna loves princess books. She is smart and funny and loves to sing, draw, dance, write, and go shopping. She is nine years old and she wants to be a teacher when she grows up. Math is her favorite subject. Keyshawnna likes to go to church because she gets to learn. She enjoys going to the zoo and her favorite animal is the giraffe. She is a resilient, sweet, caring little girl.

Keyshawnna would do well in a one or two-parent home where the parents can provide love and attention. Parents who understand the effects of trauma on children would be a great fit for Keyshawnna. She needs to feel fully accepted and respected and she would thrive in a home where her culture and background are celebrated. Keyshawnna would do well as the youngest or only child in a family with a great support system. She would also very much like to have a puppy someday. (82671A) *Lake County*



Tyler 🎥

Tyler is a pleasant fifteen-year-old boy who is very creative and likes to work with his hands. He is able to build model cars, intricate Lego figures, and wood structures without instructions. He enjoys movies and video games. Tyler has a strong desire to be a part of a forever family. He wants to attend a Christian church and go with his future adoptive family. Tyler is an outdoorsman and enjoys fishing. He is well-mannered and can be very helpful and caring.

Tyler needs to be in an environment where can feel safe, loved, and have positive interactions with adults. He would do best in a nurturing home with clear boundaries and expectations. He would do best in an environment with clear, concrete rules and structure. Tyler has stated that he would like to live in the country. He would enjoy an active family with a mother, father, and brothers in the home. Family should be prepared to advocate for Tyler's emotional needs. (8268BD) *Harrison County*

Indiana Adoption Program




Samantha

Samantha is adorable, especially when she is happy. She is an observant, sweet, smiley little three-year-old. She loves music and lights. Her collection of toys is quite expansive! She especially likes watching Mickey Mouse on tv and listening to country music or her Baby Einstein dvds. She sits up by herself and she loves to roll.

Samantha has many medical needs and would do well in a two-parent home with parents who understand her needs. Parents who are patient and can help her maintain the routine that she needs would be beneficial for her. She is learning sign language, as well as how to use a tablet. Samantha would do well in home where her communication and medical needs are advocated for. (8269JS) *St. Joseph County*



Samuel 

Samuel is a bright nine-year-old boy with a great personality. He has a good sense of humor and is quick to smile. Samuel is intelligent and enjoys learning new things. He catches onto new concepts easily and likes to share what he has learned. His favorite subject in school is science because he likes to learn about the world. Samuel enjoys playing Legos and putting things together. He describes himself as, "Fast, athletic, funny, and smart." Samuel enjoys playing football and playing outside. When he's inside, he likes to play video games, like Minecraft.

A home that would be best for Samuel would be a two-parent home with older siblings. Potential parents should be nurturing, patient, and understanding, able to show unconditional love. Samuel would do well in a home that is active and can provide plenty of supervision and positive attention. (8270DH) *Fulton County*



Jamel

Jamel would like to have younger siblings someday because he wants to teach them about games. He loves basketball, football, video games, and joking around. He is funny, respectful, and athletic and he loves to draw Marvel characters. Jamel is thirteen years old and when he grows up, he wants to be a game engineer or a football coach. Jamel likes to eat healthy foods; salad is his favorite. If he could have three wishes, they would be: 1. to be good at mechanics, 2. to be a running back for the Seahawks, and 3. to make robots.

Jamel really wants to be part of a family. He would do well in a home with one or two parents, with or without other children. He has stated that he would feel more comfortable with a Caucasian family, but he is open to all families so long as they are kind. He is resilient and making great progress processing the trauma that he has been through. He would do well with understanding parents who encourage him. He is described as "a joy to be around." (8280SS) *Tippecanoe County*



Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**



Mari

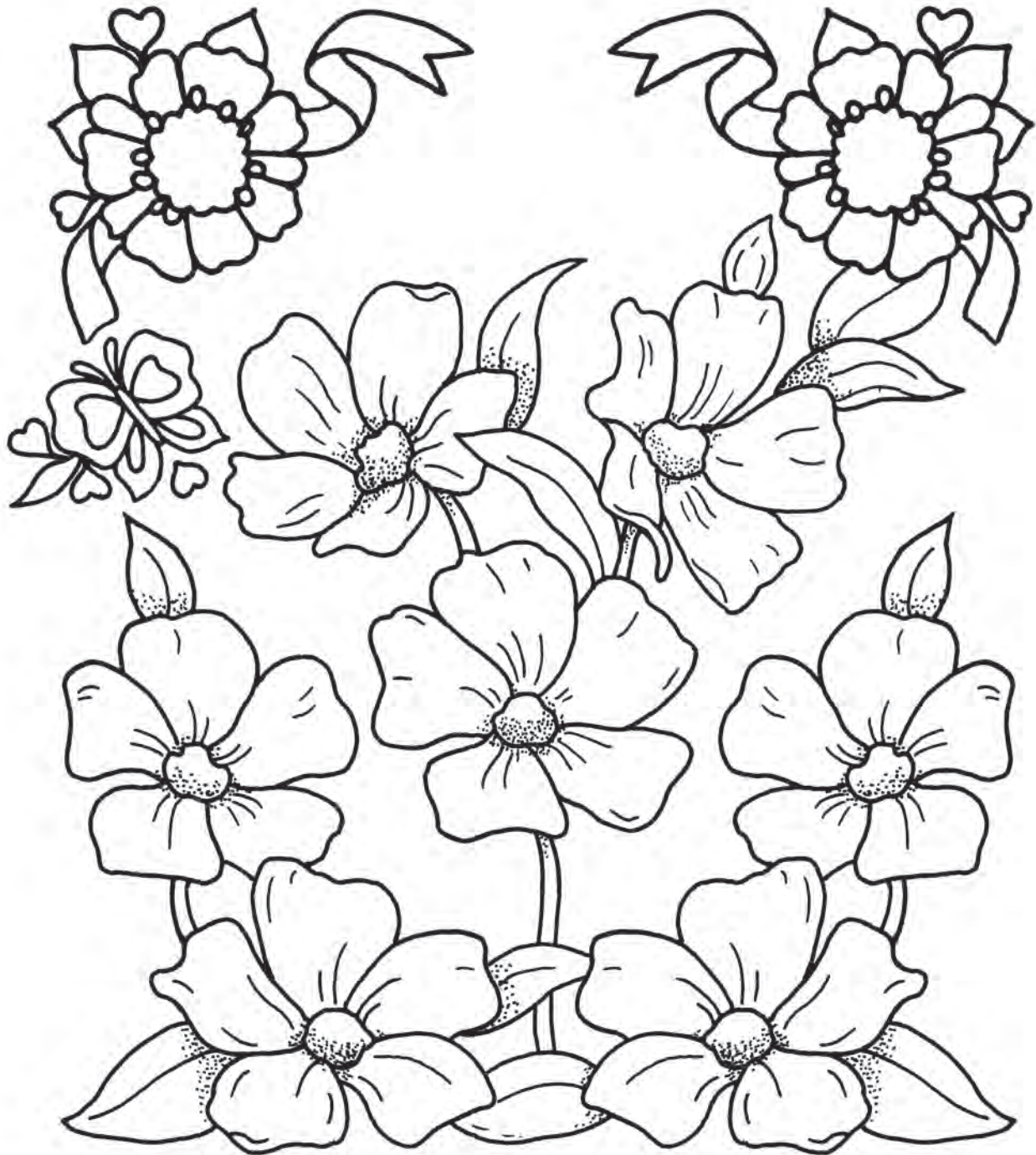
Mari is a creative, talkative thirteen-year-old girl who plays the flute and loves scrapbooking. Mari would love to have a dog someday. She also wants to go to Africa to help Ebola patients. She describes herself as “nice and a good friend.” She enjoys going to church. She would like to participate in gymnastics and she loves to make crafts.

Family is very important to Mari. She hopes to find a family where the parent or parents are supportive and active. She would do well in a structured home. Mari needs a safe and stable home environment where she can be a kid. She has many creative outlets and her new family should encourage those.
(8282JS) *Allen County*

Decorate Easter eggs!



Color the spring flowers!



Indiana Adoption Program

What is Adoption?

Adoption is meant to establish a legally recognized, lifelong relationship between a parent and child who are not parent/child related biologically. The adoptive parent(s) becomes legally and morally responsible for the child's safety, education, health care, value development, development of life skills, as well as the day-to-day care of that child.

Our society acknowledges that the man and woman who biologically create a life are traditionally the ones responsible for the child. Our society created adoption as a means to meet the needs of children whose biological parents are not able to assume the responsibilities of parenting.

Originally, adoption laws were based on "ownership"-type principles and focused on the rights of adults. However, over time, laws have become much more focused on meeting the emotional, physical, spiritual and developmental needs of the child.

In the past, the two people who biologically gave them life raised most children. This is no longer the case in our country. Today, single parents, grandparents, stepparents, foster parents or other parents acting as guardian are parenting a majority of children. Many children are now experiencing what it is like to have multiple sets of parents, grandparents and extended families. It is common for a child to experience a series of adults functioning in parental roles in their family.

Children who are adopted always have at least two sets of parents. For these children to be able to understand who they are, it is important for them to come to know, at some level, each of the parents who have had a part in creating the life they are living. All children try to make sense of these complex relationships. The more they know about the people to whom they have had any type of parental tie, the more successful they will be at developing a more complete picture of themselves.

According to Vera Fahlberg, a child and family expert and author, we can divide the parenting role in a child's life into three parts. Part One, ***the Biological Aspect of Parenting***, gives life itself to a child. The biological parent also determines the sex of the child, eye color, hair color and texture, intellectual potential, temperament, potential talents as well as some of the medical conditions that may surface as the child develops. Racial and ethnic heritage are also determined by the biological factors.

Part Two, ***the Legal Aspect of Parenting***, is financially responsible for the child. It is the legal parent's responsibility to keep the child

safe and secure. The legal parent makes all important decisions for the child, for instance, deciding where the child will live, what school the child will attend, what medical care is given, etc. This parent is also legally and financially responsible for the child's actions.

Part Three, ***the Parenting Aspect of Parenting***, sees to the day-to-day care of the child. This parent is responsible for providing love and discipline. This parent models behavior for the child to copy. This is the person who cooks meals, washes clothes, helps with school work, takes care of the ill child, watches the child's ball game etc. This person is the child's primary educator who teaches values, religion, and most life skills.

For any child, it would be much easier to understand life if the same one or two people filled all three of these parental roles throughout the child's entire life. For many children, and all adopted children, multiple people are involved. Most children are able to do quite well with multiple "parents" as long as transitions are handled appropriately and the child has someone to talk with about the changes. In fact, many very successful adults credit their success to having had many parent models and mentors along the way.

Circumstances and the legal system may change who provides two of these three parts of parenting to a particular child. However, circumstances and the legal system cannot change the biological connection. **The child's bonds to the biological parents are permanent and important to whom that child is as a person.** Anyone planning to adopt a child needs to recognize and value this fact.

Recognizing this is the only way that you will be able to understand the identity questions that the child will wrestle with as he or she grows and matures. The adoptive parent, who assumes both the role of legal parent and parenting parent for their adoptive child, can help them reach their highest potential by helping the child deal with such issues.

In a legal sense, people become a member of a family in one of three ways: by birth, by marriage or by adoption. "Family" is defined in our legal structure as two or more people who: 1)

Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**

have biological ties; or 2) make a long-term legally binding commitment to each other.

When entering a family by birth, the child shares genetics as well as cultural and ethnic heritage with others in the family.

When entering a family through adoption or marriage, family members blend themselves emotionally with another person or persons who usually differ in genetics and heritage. There generally is no biological tie. However, governments and societies

have developed ways to recognize the great importance and permanence of such deep, emotional commitments.

Laws, regulations and practices have been developed to give persons related by adoption and marriage comparable rights and responsibilities as those related by birth. Our society expects all families, whether formed by birth, adoption or marriage, to be permanent connections that offer love, acceptance and support for all members.

How Do I Start The Adoption Process in Indiana?

The Adoption Process for a child who is a ward of Indiana requires the supervision of the Department of Child Services. The process begins with Family Preparation and parents are required to attend educational workshops and complete a Family Preparation Assessment, sometimes called a Home Study. You can learn more about the process in another section of this book. Prospective Adoptive parents must be recommended to the Indiana Adoption Program after their Family Preparation is complete and approved.

You will be given the contact information of those in your community responsible for helping you with Family Preparation and your contact information will be submitted to your local Training Coordinator and to your local county Department of Child Services. The Training Coordinator will send you a schedule and they may contact you about registering for the educational workshops. You can also choose to contact your community agencies.

If you have an approved Family Preparation Assessment or Home Study from the Indiana Department of Child Services and want more information on a child introduced in the Picture Book, contact the Indiana Adoption Program. You will be given the contact information for the child and your contact

information will be submitted to the child's social worker and Special Needs Adoption Specialist.

We encourage you to contact the Indiana Adoption Program first in order to ensure that you communicate to the proper individuals responsible for any child featured in this book

To begin to inquire about Family Preparation contact the Indiana Adoption Program:

Call 1-888-25-ADOPT or e-mail at snap@childrensbureau.org

Indiana Adoption Program

How to Adopt Overview

The information below provides an overview of the steps involved in adopting a child from the foster care system. This information has been reprinted in part from the National Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC) and can be read in more detail on their website at www.nacac.org or at www.adoptachild.in.gov.

Step 1: Educate Yourself about Adoption

Where Do I Start Learning?

Ask adoptive parents where they started their adoption journey and you will get many answers. For some their process began with reading a newspaper or magazine article. Maybe they found adoption material on the Internet. They may have checked out a book on adoption from their local library. Others may have known someone who had already adopted and talked with them about expectations and what steps to take. Others may have looked in the phone book for adoption agencies in their area, then called and received basic information, either on the phone or in the mail.

The more information you have, the better choices you can make for yourself and your children-to-be. Individuals must choose for themselves when and how to gather the information they need.

National Adoption Organizations

The National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (NAIC) publishes a wide variety of adoption fact sheets, many of which are free or very inexpensive. It also provides information about state and federal adoption laws, and tracks upcoming adoption conferences. NAIC's web site includes a searchable collection of adoption-related articles and report abstracts, as well as a directory of more than 5,700 public and private adoption agencies, support groups, and government officials. To learn more, contact:

NAIC

330 C St. S.W.
Washington, DC 20447
888-251-0075 or 703-352-3488
fax: 703-385-3206
e-mail: NAIC@calib.com
web: www.childwelfare.gov

North American Council on Adoptable Children

This national organization offers information and resources to support adoption of children from the foster care system. They host a national conference each year for adoptive families and families waiting to adopt.

970 Raymond Avenue, Suite 106
St. Paul, MN 55114
phone: 651-644-3036
fax: 651-644-9848
e-mail: info@nacac.org

Adoption Conferences

Many national, regional, and local groups hold annual adoption conferences with workshops geared toward new or prospective adoptive parents.

- Some publishers and booksellers produce or market many child welfare and adoption-related materials. Some of the best known include:

Written Materials

Child Welfare League of America

440 First St. N.W., 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20001-2085
202-638-2952 • fax: 202-638-4004
web: www.cwla.org/pubs/welcome.htm
Headquarters
2395 Crystal Dr., Suite 250
Arlington, VA 22202
Phone: 703-412-2400 • fax: 703-412-2401

Tapestry Books

P.O. Box 651
Ringoes, NJ 08551
877-266-5406 • fax: 609-737-5951
e-mail: info@tapestrybooks.com
web: www.tapestrybooks.com

Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**

- Your phone book. Adoption agencies, advocates, attorneys, support groups, and more can be found listed in the Yellow Pages under "Adoption."
- Use your public library. Most libraries now have online access so you can use the Internet, find listings of periodicals, and do inter-library transfers. A wealth of free information can be located through these means.
- Your home computer can be a gateway to adoption information. The Internet has no shortage of information about adoption.

Self Assessment

Children don't need perfect parents, just one or two individuals willing to meet the unique challenges of parenting and make a lifetime commitment to caring for and nurturing their children. One of the advantages of special needs adoption is that almost any responsible adult can become an adoptive parent. Prospective parents do not have to be rich, married, under 40, highly educated, or homeowners to adopt. Far more important are personal characteristics like:

- a belief in adoption and an ability to commit
- patience and perseverance
- a good sense of humor and talent for keeping life in perspective
- a love of children and parenting
- the ability to roll with unexpected changes, stresses, and challenges
- the ability to deal with rejection without taking it personally
- the ability to accept without judging
- tolerance and understanding for your child's conflicting feelings and your own
- an awareness that healing doesn't come quickly, all wounds cannot be healed, and your child may not attach to your family
- the strength to be consistent and set limits
- a willingness to learn new parenting techniques and advocate for your children's educational and medical needs
- resourcefulness

If you have all or most of those qualities, then ask yourself these questions:

- Do I clearly understand why I want to adopt?
- If applicable — do my partner and I work as a team? Are we both committed to adoption?
- If applicable — have I talked with my own children and considered their feelings?
- Does my lifestyle allow me the time necessary to meet the needs of a special child?

Think carefully about your answers to these questions. You may decide to pursue a different type of adoption, consider foster care, or realize that adoption really is not for you. Take the time to make a good decision, because it is a decision you and your adoptive child will live with for life.

In addition, before seriously contemplating special needs adoption, prospective parents must honestly evaluate their desire and ability to successfully parent children who have troubling pasts and uncertain futures. Many children who become available for adoption at older ages have not received the early care that kids need to develop a strong sense of security, trust, and self-esteem. Many also suffer from conditions caused by past trauma, or prenatal exposure to alcohol or drugs. Children whose backgrounds include traumatic experiences, abuse, and/or neglect may exhibit symptoms of distress such as:

- aggressiveness
- attachment disorders
- attention deficits and hyperactivity
- bed wetting
- defiance
- depression
- impulsiveness
- learning disabilities
- low self-esteem
- lying
- poor peer relationships/social skills

Fortunately, through therapy, medication, and consistent care, children can overcome or at least better cope with many of these challenges.

Indiana Adoption Program

Most children put their new adoptive parents through a period of testing to see if the parents are truly committed or just waiting for an excuse to desert the child as others have done before. To improve your chances of successfully adopting a child who has special needs, be prepared to offer a home environment that combines extra love, support, and attention with clear structure and consistent limit-setting. Parents should also be ready to actively advocate for their child at school, with peers, and within the community. It can be immensely helpful for parents to have a support network or belong to an adoptive parent support group.

Step 2: Decide What Type of Adoption You Want to Pursue

Even if you already know that you want to adopt a child who has special needs, you still need to make a number of choices about your adoption. Most importantly, you need to decide what type of child you are willing to bring into your family. What disabilities and challenges (physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral) can you comfortably handle? What age range, background, and ethnicity would fit best within your household and community? Are you open to helping your adopted child maintain contact with some of his or her birth relatives? Can you welcome a group of two or more siblings into your home?

Next, you might want to consider whether you would rather work through a public or a private adoption agency. Though most children who have special needs become available for adoption through the public foster care system, both public and private agencies can help you locate a child or sibling group to adopt.

Step 3: Investigate Ways to Cover Adoption Expenses

Many agencies do not charge service fees to families who adopt children from the foster care system. However, you will need a home study, and because adoption is a legal process, you may need an attorney. The cost of a home study can vary from \$0 to \$3,000. Attorney fees and court costs can range from \$2,000 to \$5,000, and special needs adoptive families often incur additional costs for medical services, counseling, etc. — costs that may continue throughout the child's lifetime. Fortunately, due to federal and employer-initiated programs, parents have several options for covering the cost of special needs adoption.

Employer Assistance

Employers who offer adoption benefits may provide workers with:

- direct cash assistance for adoption expenses
- reimbursement of approved adoption expenses
- paid or unpaid leave (beyond federal leave requirements established through the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993)
- resource and referral services

To request a list of employers who provide adoption benefits or learn more about employer provided adoption benefits, contact: Adoption Benefits Coordinator, National Adoption Center, 1500 Walnut Street, Suite 701, Philadelphia, PA 19102; 800-TO-ADOPT or 215-735-9988.

Tax Credits and Exclusions

Because tax credits change from year to year, please consult the IRS website or a tax specialist for inquiries regarding tax credits.

Adoption Subsidies

If you adopt a child who has special needs, he or she may be eligible for federal adoption assistance. Adoption assistance payments are designed to help offset the short- and long-term costs associated with adopting children who need special services. Children who are wards may be eligible for adoption assistance benefits if they meet specific eligibility guidelines.

Indiana Adoption Subsidy

Indiana Adoption Subsidy is determined by the Central Eligibility Unit. Please contact centralized.eligibility@dcs.in.gov or 877.265.0086 with questions.

Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**

Step 4: Select an Adoption Agency

How to Find Agencies

To find as many agencies to choose from as possible, consider several of the options listed below:

- The Indiana Adoption Program is coordinated through the County Department of Child Services (CDCS) and private Licensed Child Placing Agencies (LCPA) that are contracted with the local counties to provide adoption services, including Family Preparation. You can contact the Indiana Adoption Program at 1-888-25-ADOPT or view a list of SNAP Specialists at <http://www.in.gov/dcs/2747.htm> for agency information in your area.
- Look in the Yellow Pages under “Adoption” or “Social Services” for private adoption agencies. If you live in a small town, you may want to check in a phone book from a larger community nearby.
- Contact adoptive parent support groups or adoptive parents for suggestions. Both are a great source of information about agencies and adoption, plus they are usually eager to share what they know with prospective adopters. To find an adoptive parent support group in your area contact your local county DCS to see if they know of one or use the Internet to search. Support groups are generally very informal and you may need to ask people in your community who have adopted to find out if a group meets near you.

Finding the Right Agency for You

To find a public or private agency that is a good fit for you, your beliefs and values, and your unique situation, compare information from several different agencies. Most will gladly provide details about their services and requirements upon request. Before selecting an agency, take the initiative to interview agency representatives by phone or in person to learn more about them. You may want to ask:

- Who can adopt from the agency?
- What kinds of children does the agency place (ages, backgrounds, etc.)?
- Does the agency work with the foster care system or is it exclusively a private adoption agency?
- Where do the agency's children come from, and how many are legally free for adoption?
- How long, on average, must one wait for a child? What is the time lapse between application and placement?

- How much does a completed adoption cost—in total and part by part?
- What are the assessment or home study requirements?
- What services — such as parenting classes, support group activities, access to therapy and counseling, and respite care — will the agency provide before and after a child is placed in your home?
- Can the agency provide references from parents who recently adopted from the agency?

Step 5: Let Your Agency Know You Are Serious about Adopting

When you call an agency to let staff there know you are interested in adopting, the person you talk to may ask a series of screening questions or simply volunteer to send literature about the agency. If you want to adopt relatively soon, find out how you can get the process started.

One common first step is an orientation meeting or training session for prospective adoptive parents. At the meeting or training you will likely:

- meet social workers and learn about policies and practices regarding adoption
- learn what types of children are available for adoption through the agency
- learn about foster care
- be asked to examine your feelings about adoption, and judge if adoption is the right choice for you
- gain insight into the challenges and rewards of adoptive parenting
- obtain application materials

Step 6: Adoption Application

The application process may be different between private agencies and those agencies (LCPA) that contract with the DCS for the Indiana Adoption Program. If you are adopting a child who is in foster care, you may need to attend several of the educational workshops before you begin the application or Family Preparation process.

Indiana Adoption Program

If you find that the application process is hard to understand, ask the agency or another adoptive parent for help. Don't let the challenges of completing forms keep you from pursuing adoption.

Find out how long it will take for the agency to process your application once you have completed the forms. Ask when you should next expect to hear from the agency, and how you can schedule and prepare for an assessment or home study.

Step 7: Attend Adoption and Parenting Classes

Public agencies commonly require pre-placement training to acquaint prospective parents with issues that can arise after a child or sibling group is placed with them. School-aged adoptees bring not only unique special needs, but also a history of life experiences that will affect interactions with adoptive parents, new siblings, schoolmates, and others. Issues related to disability, culture, early abuse, and a child's birth family should all be discussed before a child is placed in your home.

Prospective adoptive parents who want to be approved to adopt children through the Indiana Adoption Program must complete the Resource & Adoptive Parent Training (RAPT) sessions I-IV. Pre-Adoption Training is scheduled through your local Training Coordinator. To find out who the Training Coordinator is in your area contact the Indiana Adoption Program.

Step 8: Begin the Family Preparation Process

The Family Preparation process can loosely be defined as an educational process designed to help your social worker learn more about your ability to parent and provide a stable home, to teach you about adoption and its effect on children and families, and to prepare you to parent a child whose experiences and history are very different from your own. Everyone who hopes to adopt must have a completed Family Preparation Assessment, also called a home study. Depending on the agency, the worker, and the prospective parents' cooperation, the process can take anywhere from two months to a year.

Items You May Need for a Family Preparation Assessment (Home Study)

Specific requirements for assessments or home studies vary by agency, so be sure to ask for a list of the items and information your agency needs. The following items are commonly required during the assessment process:

- an autobiographical statement — a statement you create about your life history
- certified copies of birth certificates for you, your partner, and any children
- a certified copy of your marriage license
- certified copies of divorce decrees
- the death certificate of a former spouse
- certified copies of the finalization or adoption decrees for any adopted children
- child abuse and criminal record clearances, or a notarized statement from the police declaring that you and your partner have faced no felony convictions
- income verification (may include tax returns, W-2 forms, and paycheck stubs)
- a statement of health provided by a physician, which might include lab test results or a statement of infertility
- written references from friends, employers, neighbors, etc.

At some point in the process, you may also need to pay for the home study. The cost through a public agency may be quite low or even free; other agencies typically charge between \$500 and \$2,000 for a completed study.

Questions You May Be Asked

During Family Preparation meetings with your worker, you can expect to answer questions about your background, your education, your job history, your marriage, your leisure activities, your religion (particularly for religiously affiliated agencies), and your experiences with children. For instance, the worker may ask:

- What is your family like? How will you integrate your new child into your family?
- How will your extended family treat an adopted child?
- How is your marriage? How do you make decisions,

Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**

resolve conflicts, and express your feelings?

- Why do you want to adopt?
- What is your home like? Are there places for your child to play or spend time alone?
- What is your neighborhood like?
- How do you plan to address discipline issues with your new child?
- What was your family like when you were growing up? How were you raised? Are you close to your parents?
- Where do you work? Is your schedule flexible enough to accommodate the responsibilities that come with parenting?
- What sort of child care arrangements will you make for your child?

The aim of any assessment or home study is to help the agency locate the best home for each child it places, and make good matches between prospective parents and children. If you have questions about the process, ask your social worker or agency.

Step 9: Begin Searching for a Child

If you adopt through the Indiana Adoption Program, you are urged to complete training and your Family Preparation process before you begin searching for a child. It may take several months for you to complete the process and become approved to adopt, so a child that you see listed in the Picture Book now may not be available several months from now.

The children are listed in the Picture Book by their first name, followed by an identification number. The last two letters of the identification number are the initials for the SNAP specialist for the child. The SNAPs and their contact information can be found on the back inside cover of the Picture Book.

If you adopt through a private agency, learn how the agency will conduct a search. What criteria do they use to match children with families? Are they willing to search outside your immediate area for a child? If you learn of a child in another state, will the agency pursue the child for you?

Step 10: Considering a Child

Before agreeing to accept any child or sibling group for adoption,

learn as much as you can about the child — including prenatal care and exposure to drugs or alcohol, birth parents' medical histories, attachments to foster families or other relatives, foster care placements, relationships with siblings, interests and talents, etc. Most agencies want adoptive parents to get to know children before agreeing to adopt. If the child has certain medical conditions or other disabilities, decide if your family is prepared to address issues that may arise from the child's situation.

If you agree to adopt and accept placement of a child whose birth parents' rights have not been voluntarily surrendered or involuntarily terminated (known as a legal-risk placement), you must accept the chance that the child could be returned to his or her birth parents. Until birth parents' rights are terminated, the child cannot legally become a member of your family and must instead stay in your home as a foster child.

Questions for Prospective Adoptive Parents to Ask

- a. What is known about the child's birth history?
- b. What is known about the child's developmental history — physically, mentally, emotionally and socially?
- c. Is there any evidence of handicap? Any suspected learning difficulties?
- d. When was last contact with any birth family member?
- e. Are there pictures the birth family can pass on, or any family memento?
- f. Is there a Life Book for the child?
- g. Are there any siblings? Will it be possible or beneficial for ongoing contact with siblings (if they have been separated)?
- h. What social and medical history is available on the parents? On extended family members or siblings?
- i. Do the parents have a history of drug or alcohol abuse? Was the mother using substances during the pregnancy?
- j. What was the home environment like? What was the environment of the foster home(s) like?
- k. How many moves or placements did the child experience and why did they occur?
- l. What is the child's current adjustment status?
- m. Has the child been prepared for the adoptive placement? How can you help?

Indiana Adoption Program

- n. What is the child's current health status? Does the child have any allergies?
- o. Is there any history of physical, sexual or emotional abuse? What treatment has been pursued?
- p. What method of discipline works best with the child?
- q. Does the child accept and give affection?
- r. Does the child have any therapeutic needs or treatment plans?
- s. What adoption subsidy options are there for the child?

Step 11: Prepare for Your Child's Arrival

Anticipate how the addition of a new family member will affect your life and plan accordingly. Depending on your situation and the child you adopt, you may need to:

- Update the family's insurance. Adoptees can be covered under your health insurance from the date they are placed with your family. Group health insurance carriers must insure adoptees under the terms of their parents' policy and cannot deny coverage due to pre-existing conditions. Add a child to your health insurance plan within 30 days after he or she is placed in your home. If your child is eligible for an adoption subsidy, he or she may be covered through Medicaid. Also change beneficiary designations on life insurance policies and update wills as needed.
- Get and keep a copy of the adoption decree with the child's amended birth certificate. Once the adoption is finalized, that document may be sealed and neither you nor the adoptee can access it. Without it, some adoptees have had trouble getting passports and other official documents. With it, adoptees may have an easier time searching for their biological roots, if and when they decide to do so.
- Prepare to get a new social security card and birth certificate for your child that recognizes the child's new last name and family situation. To claim your child as a dependent for tax purposes, the child must have a social security number.
- Learn as much as you can about the child's habits and personality. Talk to the child's foster parents and worker so you can learn information that will help ease the

child's transition into your family. What are the child's favorite foods and games? What is the best way to comfort the child?

- Keep items that tie to the child's past. Encourage the child to bring all his possessions from previous homes, and ask the foster parents and workers for copies of any pictures they have of the child. Never throw away broken toys or worn out clothes unless the child wants to. Familiar objects and smells are comforting, and the child needs you to respect that he has a past and prior attachments and loyalties.
- Make your house child-friendly. Reposition or remove household objects that could be dangerous to your new child. Prepare the child's room to make it welcoming and to signal that the area belongs to him or her.
- Inform your other children about changes that will occur. Tell your children how their roles may change when the new child arrives. Prepare them to share, adjust schedules, and withhold judgment during the transition. Include everyone in visits and trial weekends before the child is placed, and establish clear ground rules for behavior, interaction, and discipline.
- Negotiate an adoption assistance agreement. Parents who adopt an eligible child with special needs from a public or private agency can receive federal or state benefits for their child. Ask your agency what steps you must take to obtain a subsidy and negotiate an adoption assistance agreement, including any post-adoptive services and subsidies.

Step 12: The Child is Placed in Your Home

If you adopt a younger child, you may need to find day care. If you adopt an older child, you may need to enroll him or her in school; arrange for therapy, counseling, or tutoring; and identify respite care options. You might also want to join an adoptive parent support group.

Children who are placed for adoption through public agencies may move in with an adoptive family as soon as the parents complete required pre-placement visits and are approved to adopt-provided the timing is not unnecessarily disruptive to the child's schooling or other activities.

When a new child is placed in your home, you will assume

Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**

temporary legal custody. For a few months, while your family undergoes the inevitable adjustment period, your agency will monitor how the placement is proceeding.

The monitoring period typically lasts about six months to a year. During this time, the worker may call or visit to assess how you and your new child are adjusting, and to answer questions. If all goes well, at the end of the monitoring period the agency will recommend to the court that the adoption be approved.

Step 13: File a Petition to Adopt

An adoption petition is the document filed in court that initiates the legal aspect of adoption. Through the petition, adoptive parents formally request permission to adopt a specific child. To file a petition you will likely need the following information and documentation:

- the child's birth certificate or birth date and place of birth
- a written statement that confirms your desire and suitability to adopt, as well as your ability to provide financially for the child
- a written declaration that the adoption is in the child's best interest
- your name, age, and address
- the date on which and from whom you received custody of the child
- a statement of the legal reason why the birth parents' rights are being (or have been) terminated
- a disclosure of any relationship that you share with the child (other than as an adoptive parent) — such as being the child's aunt, grandparent, or stepparent

Step 14: Finalize the Adoption

Your adoption is not legally complete until your newly created family goes through the finalization process. Finalization hearings usually take place within a year after a child is placed in the home. Before scheduling a hearing, check with your agency to make sure you have completed the necessary paperwork. If you are missing required documents, the finalization could be delayed.

The finalization hearing is a judicial proceeding, sometimes

held in the judge's chambers, during which adoptive parents are granted permanent legal custody of their adopted child. The hearing, which usually lasts only 30 to 60 minutes, is designed to establish the legality of the new family unit, and confirm that the adoptive parents are willing and able to provide for their new child.

Who Should Attend the Hearing

The following individuals generally attend the finalization hearing:

- the adoptive parents and adoptee(s)
- the adoptive family's lawyer
- the agency social worker who placed the child with the adoptive parents

What the Hearing Involves

To verify that the adoption should take place, the court will attempt to establish that the child has been placed in a safe, loving home. Expect to list all the identifying information included in your adoption petition and answer questions such as:

- Why do you want to adopt?
- How will you care for your new child?
- How will your family adjust to a new child?
- Is there anything the court should know before finalizing this adoption?

As soon as the judge signs the adoption order, you gain permanent legal custody of your child. Finalization is the last formal step in the adoption process and marks the official beginning of your new family. From this point, learn as much as you can about post-adoption services (like respite care, support groups, etc.) that can help you make the most of your new role as an adoptive parent.

Indiana Adoption Program

Common Challenges of Children With Special Needs

Children in the Indiana Adoption Program are often considered to have “special needs.” Special Needs can mean different things to people. The Adoption Program has been referred to as a Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) and the regional representative coordinating the adoption process for a child is called a SNAP Specialist.

Special Needs are the unique challenges each child faces and will require parents to assist them in their childhood development and schooling in a knowledgeable way. Special Needs can describe physical disabilities, medical conditions, emotional difficulties and developmental issues.

Children in the Indiana Adoption Program are often considered to have “special needs.” Special Needs can mean different things to people. The Adoption Program has been referred to as a Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) and the regional representative coordinating the adoption process for a child is called a SNAP Specialist.

Special Needs are the unique challenges each child faces and will require parents to assist them in their childhood development and schooling in a knowledgeable way. Special Needs can describe physical disabilities, medical conditions, emotional difficulties and developmental issues.

Abuse

Many of the children, regardless of their age, in the Indiana Adoption Program have experienced abuse. This can mean physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or any combination of these types of trauma. Abuse generally leaves its mark with behavioral problems, physical impairments and therapeutic needs that require the attention of parents and professionals working together to benefit the child’s future development.

Attachment

This term describes a child’s ability to form relationships. Children who have been abused, neglected, or have experienced disruptions in significant relationships may face challenges in creating new relationships.

Attachment Disorder

An attachment disorder is a condition in which children have difficulty forming loving, lasting close relationships. Attachment disorders vary in severity, but the term is usually reserved for those who show a nearly complete lack of ability to be genuinely affectionate with others. They may seem distant, insincere or uncaring and have difficulty trusting others.

Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

ADD/ADHD is a diagnosable, treatable, biologically based disorder. The primary symptoms include some combination of being inattentive and being distracted, being impulsive, and in some children, physical restlessness or hyperactive behavior.

Developmental Disabilities (DD)

This term describes many conditions that may be mild or severe and generally includes any physical, mental or emotional condition, which will continue to inhibit the normal developmental progress of a child. Many children have educational requirements that must be met through the Special Education process of their school.

Drug-Exposed

A child born to a mother who used drugs such as cocaine or certain pharmaceuticals while she was pregnant may have damage to their nervous system. A newborn will appear stiff and rigid and have prolonged crying episodes and be at an increased risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Some children will develop behavior and learning difficulties.

A child’s challenges can range from mild to severe, and be temporary or permanent. The environment provided in a child’s future development, that may include you as their parent, will to a great degree affect the measure of their challenges.

Emotional Disability (ED)

Abuse, trauma and sometimes genetics can result in various degrees of multiple emotional challenges. This term is also used as eligibility criteria for services at school through Special Education under state and federal law.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effects (FAS/FAE)

Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND)

FAS/FAE is a set of physical, mental and neurobehavioral birth defects associated with alcohol consumption by a child's birth mother during pregnancy. Prenatal alcohol exposure does not always result in FAS—although there is no known safe level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Some children affected by alcohol exposure before birth do not have the characteristic facial abnormalities and growth retardation identified with FAS, yet they have brain and other impairments that are just as significant. Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND) describes the functional or mental impairments linked to prenatal alcohol exposure.

Learning Disability

Children with learning disabilities may be of average or above average intelligence but have difficulties remembering or understanding information. This term is also used as eligibility criteria for services at school through Special Education under state and federal law.

Mental Disability

Mental disabilities is a term that is used to describe a wide variety of different challenges and can affect children in ways that are unique to each child, especially in regards to levels of severity. This is also a term used as eligibility criteria for Special Education services.

Neglect

Neglect is the absence of essential and healthy nurturing of a child for their physical, intellectual, and emotional development. Neglect includes physical neglect, child abandonment and expulsion, medical neglect, inadequate supervision, emotional neglect and educational neglect by parents, parent substitutes, and other adult caretakers of children.

Indiana Adoption Program

The Legal Aspects of Adoption

Prospective adoptive parents should consult an attorney for legal advice and as they prepare to adopt a child.

Selecting an Attorney

Federal and state laws that apply to foster care and adoption require certain steps to be followed prior to the finalization of an adoption. It is important to have an attorney to represent you in the adoption process. Your family, friends or individuals you know who have adopted may be able to recommend an attorney for legal advice and you can find out more information on attorneys from your local county Bar Association. Sometimes it is helpful for an attorney to have knowledge of the foster care system.

For a referral to an attorney trained by ACT in adoptions from foster care, or for a free consultation with an ACT-trained attorney, please view the following website for contact information at: www.adoptioninchildtime.org

Attorney Fees

Attorney fees vary around the state. You will need to ask the attorney what fees they charge and how they bill their services. Since some children are eligible for an adoption subsidy (a one-time reimbursement of legal fees or non-recurring adoption expenses with a maximum expenditure of \$1500 per child) your attorney may be able to assist you in applying the subsidy to their fees.

Approval

Prospective adoptive parents need an approved Family Preparation Assessment (Home Study) to be recommended for a child who is a ward. Your local county Department of Child Services (DCS) and/or the private agency (LCPA) that contracts with the county must determine if you have been approved. You are required to have written approval before a child can be placed with you for adoption and through your local court jurisdiction.

Agency Supervision

Indiana law requires that adoptions be granted only after a period of supervision has been met. The child and adoptive family relationship must be supervised by a local county Department of Child Services or private child placing agency (LCPA) that contracts with them. The length of the supervision period is at the discretion of the court, however most courts require a standard time period of six months.

Required Consents

The consent of the child's mother, if she is living, is required by law to complete an adoption. The consent of a child's father who has established paternity or signed a paternity affidavit is also required. The county Department of Child Services (DCS) may have completed a court action to terminate the parent-child relationship so that a child who is a ward can be legally free for adoption, whether the child's parents have consented or not determines the type of court action that is necessary. You will need the consent of the CDCS that has the responsibility of care and supervision of the child you wish to adopt for the court proceedings, unless the court finds that their consent is not necessary to serve the best interests of the child.

Adoption Petition Filing

In Indiana, an attorney needs to file the adoption petition and represent the family through the court process. A petition may be filed in the county where the pre-adoptive parent resides, or in the county where the child resides, or where the Department of Child Services (DCS) or private agency (LCPA) has custody of the child. If you are not an Indiana resident, you may petition to adopt a child who is a ward of Indiana in the county where the LCPA or DCS has custody or the county where the child resides.

If you are married, both you and your spouse must sign the adoption petition. Partners of an unmarried couple may not petition to adopt together and in such cases, only one partner may be the petitioner.

Adoption Filing Fees

The adoption filing fee consists of the following: The adoption history fee, which is \$20 and the putative father registry fee, which is \$50. Both of these fees are sent to the State Department of Health for records maintenance; and the county clerk's office fee, which can range from \$100 to \$200. The court may not require payment of the clerk's fee if you are unable to pay it based on an affidavit regarding your income and expenses.

Adoption Assistance

If a child has been determined eligible for adoption assistance, the adoption assistance agreement **MUST** be signed by all parties before the final adoption is entered.

Opening hearts. **Changing lives.**

Adoption Chart

There are four basic types of adoption: public agency adoption, domestic private agency adoption, international adoption, and independent adoption. As the chart below shows, requirements, costs, and timing vary between and within the different types of adoption. To decide which type of adoption is best for you, think seriously about the type of child you would like to adopt (for example, an infant, an older child or group of siblings, a child from another country, a child who has special needs, etc.).

Type of Adoption	Definition	Children Available	Approximate Cost	Who Can Adopt	How Long It Takes
Public agency adoption	an adoption directed and supervised by a state or local Department of Human Services (or Social Services, or Human Resources, or Health and Welfare, or Child and Family Services, etc.)	children with special needs (kids who are harder to place due to emotional or physical disorders, age, race, membership in a sibling group, backgrounds); rarely infants	from \$0 to \$1,500 (depending on the state, up to \$1,500 of "nonrecurring" adoption costs for eligible special needs children may be reimbursed)	flexible eligibility requirements for adoptive parents; on a case-by-case basis, will consider single parents, parents over the age of 40, parents who have other children, parents with low incomes, etc.	starts slowly, but for those who have an updated home study, placement can occur as soon as a few months after selecting a child
Private agency adoption	an adoption directed and supervised by a privately funded, licensed adoption agency	sometimes handle special needs children; more commonly associated with younger children and infants	\$6,000 to \$25,000; lower for special needs children; some agencies have sliding fee scales	agencies may recruit parents based on race, religious affiliation, etc.; for infant adoptions, birth mother often chooses	a few months to a few years (sometimes longer for infant adoption)
International adoption	process of adopting a child who is not a U.S citizen, which may be accomplished privately through an attorney, or through an international adoption agency	about 88 countries currently allow their children to be adopted by U.S. citizens—6 countries in Africa, 20 in Asia, 32 in Europe, and 30 in Latin America; ages range from infant to teens; health conditions vary; generally infants	\$7,000 to \$30,000 (varies by country; travel and travel-related expenses may be additional)	depends on agency and country requirements; some will accept single parents, most prospective parents are between 25 and 45 years old	six months to several years depending on the child's age and health, and the country's political climate
Independent adoption (not legal in all states; also known as private adoption)	an adoption initiated by prospective adopters and completed with help from an attorney or adoption counselor		\$5,000 to \$40,000 (includes prospective parents' cost of finding a birth mother, certain birth mother expenses, and attorney's fees)	birth mothers typically choose the adoptive parent — preferences tend to run toward younger, affluent, married couples	variable; as long as it takes to find a birth mother who will see the process through to finalization

Reprinted by permission from the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC)

Indiana Adoption Program

Youth Connections Program

The Department of Child Services (DCS) provides a youth driven, youth led program that primarily serves foster youth 14 and older, who have expressed that they do not want to be adopted. This program recognizes the need for all youth to have caring, committed adults in their life to help them make the transition to adulthood, and works to facilitate these connections.

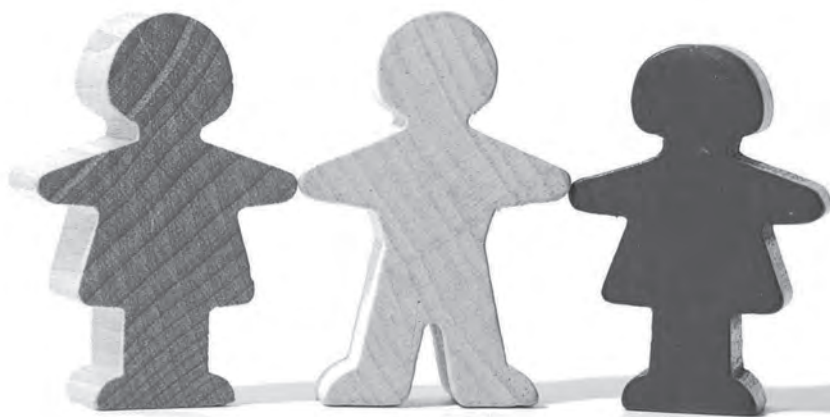
The Youth Connections Program has been implemented to assist youth who will be on their own when they leave foster care. Every young person aging out of foster care should have at least one caring adult in their life whom they can count on to be there for them when they need support, guidance, advice and resources.

What can you do? Consider that a youth on his/her own will need someone to talk to; for advice or a sympathetic ear or to celebrate a birthday, they may need help finding a job, finishing school, or locating a safe place to live, a place to do laundry or use the telephone, a ride to work, an occasional meal, some emergency cash, they may need a coat or someone to advocate for them.

Youth Connections Program Specialists will provide support to the adults and youth to help build and sustain a relationship that will nurture a long-term connection. They will assist in identifying Independent Living services and community resources for the teen.

To find out how you can help and to receive further information on the program, please contact one of the people listed below, nearest to your own location.

Barbara A. Gainer
Youth Connections Specialist for Northeast
217 East Southway Blvd, Suite 202
Kokomo, Indiana 46901
(765)865-2212 (Work)
(765)864-3000 (Fax)
Barbara.Gainer@dcs.in.gov



Beth Prebeck
Youth Connections Specialist for Southern
3528 Two Mile House Rd
Columbus, IN 47201
(317)439-6599 (Work)
Beth.Prebeck@dcs.in.gov

Preandra Jones
Youth Connections Specialist for Northwest
302 W. Washington St., E306, MS-47
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 234-5008 (Work)
(317) 232-4436 (Fax)
Preandra.Jones@dcs.in.gov

Dave Schoening
Youth Connections Specialist for Central
938 N. 10th Street
Noblesville, IN 46060
(317) 383-1967 (Work)
Dave.Schoening@dcs.IN.gov

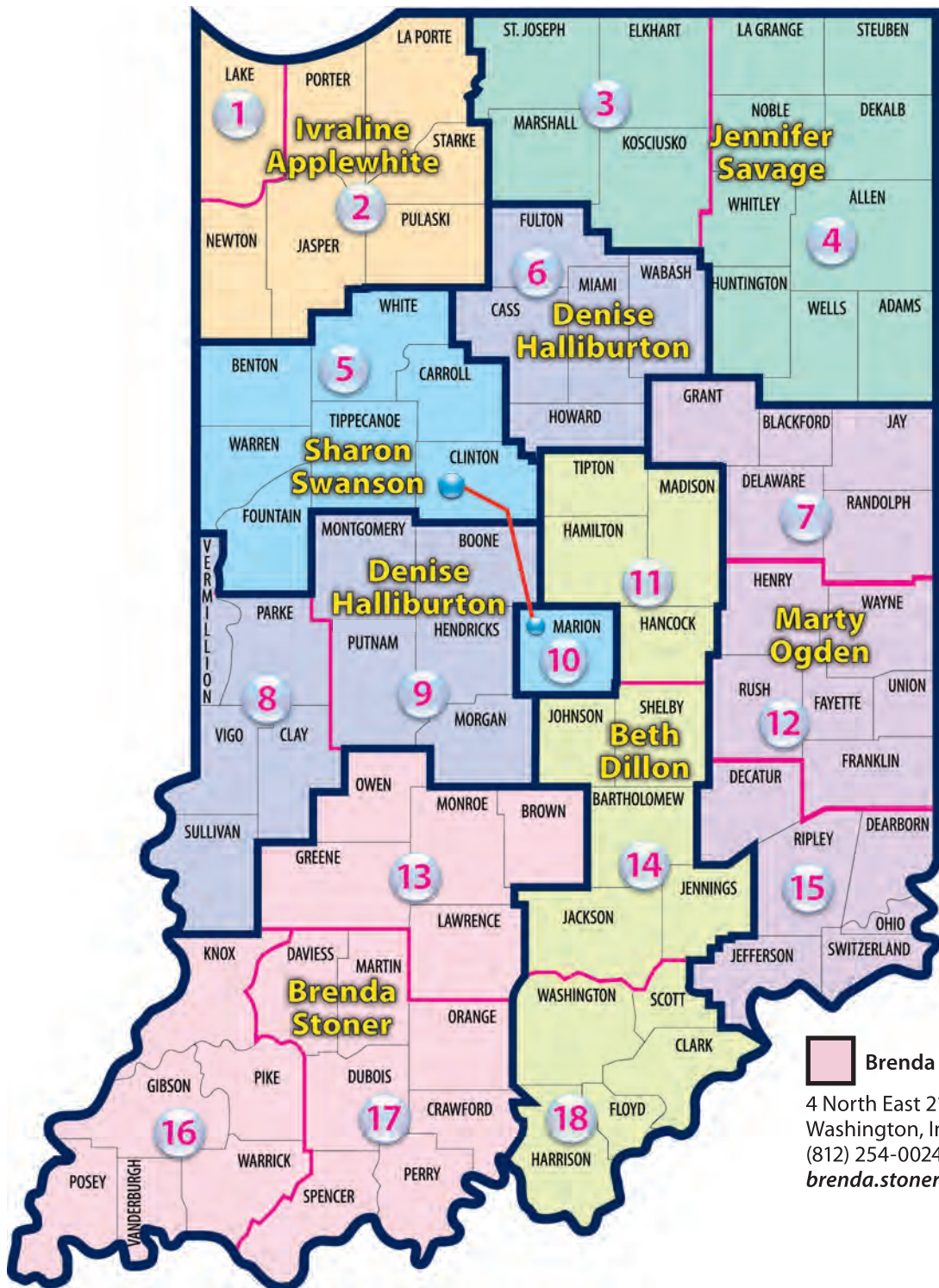
Area Specialist Locator Map

Thank you for your interest in Indiana's Adoption Program.

This map shows the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) specialist who coordinates adoption information for their Team.

For more information, please call the toll-free number—

1-888-25-ADOPT



- Sharon Swanson**

4150 N. Keystone Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46205-2843
(317) 544-3890
Sharon.Swanson@dcs.in.gov
- Ivraline Applewhite**

661 Broadway
Gary, Indiana 46402
(219) 881-2043, ext: 13280
Ivraline.applewhite@dcs.in.gov
- Jennifer Savage**

122 N. Detroit Street
LaGrange, Indiana 46761
(260) 463-3451 ext. 11710
jennifer.savage@dcs.in.gov
- Denise Halliburton**

953 Monument Drive
Lebanon, Indiana 46052
(765) 482-3023, ext: 12862
denise.halliburton@dcs.in.gov
- Marty Ogden**

1025 East Freeland Road, Suite B
Greensburg, Indiana 47240
(812) 663-6768, ext: 12954
marjorie.ogden@dcs.in.gov
- Beth Dillon**

2535 Parkway Drive, Ste. 1
Shelbyville, Indiana 46176
(317) 392-5040, ext: 11917
elizabeth.dillon@dcs.in.gov
- Brenda Stoner**

4 North East 21st Street
Washington, Indiana 47501
(812) 254-0024, ext: 12191
brenda.stoner@dcs.in.gov

The Indiana Adoption Program
c/o Children's Bureau Inc.
3801 N. Temple Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

NONPROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Indianapolis, IN
Permit No. 7777

Opening hearts. Changing lives.

The Indiana Adoption Program
c/o Children's Bureau Inc.
3801 N. Temple Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46205

www.adoptachild.in.gov

1-888-25-ADOPT

*Subscription information
is available in this book on
page 3.*

